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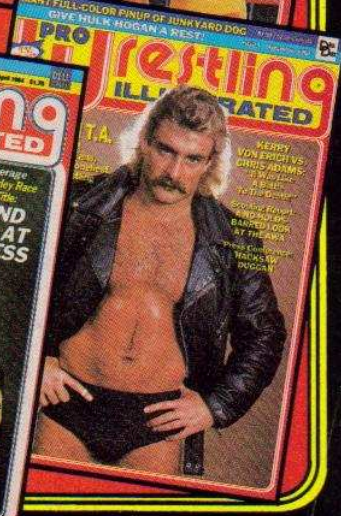
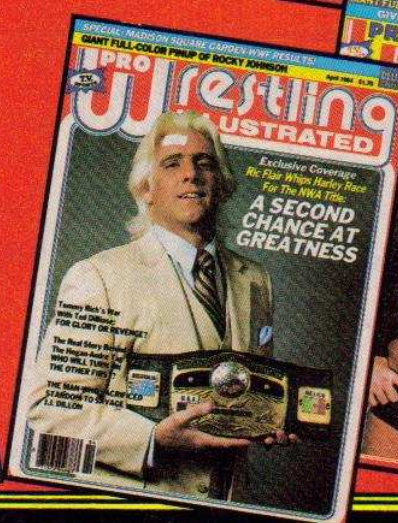
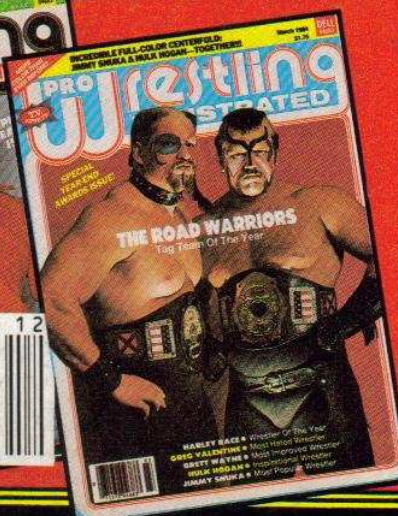
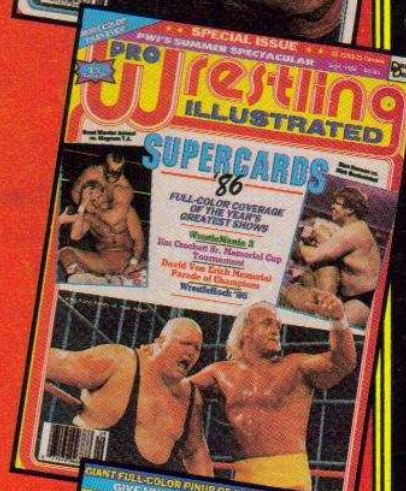
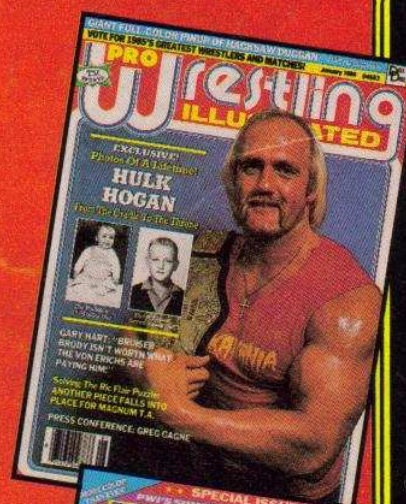
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PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

A Special
Anniversary
Celebration!
100th
ISSUE!
An Incredible
Look Back At
The PWI Years!



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PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED

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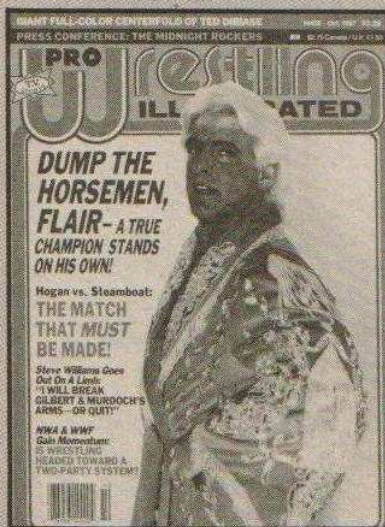
THE NATURE OF FLAIR

I think Ric Flair is the best thing to ever happen to professional wrestling! In the October 1987 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, you said that he should dump The Four Horsemen ("Dump The Horsemen, Flair—A True Champion Stands On His Own!"). I like all of them and think they shouldn't split up. They make a terrific gang.

A lot of people talk about the way the NWA champ disqualifies himself on purpose so he can keep his title, puts his foot on the ropes, or uses outside help like the Horsemen. But I would like to hear of one wrestler who, in his career, hasn't done *any* of those things! Name one!

GINGER C. SANDERS
Odin, IL

Ric Flair dump the Horsemen? Are you crazy? The Four Horsemen are the best thing to happen to Ric besides winning the NWA



title. You say that Ric is tainting the title by the way he wrestles and the people he associates with. What about Harley Race, who's being destroyed in the WWF? I mean, a seven-time NWA World champion is getting beat by the likes of Hulk Hogan. And as far as the people Ric associates with, The Four Horsemen are one of the greatest—if

not *the* greatest—wrestling stables in the business today. How many stables can you think of that have three of the highest-ranking belts in the sport? Think about that.

And as for you, Ric, don't listen to them—you're in the best place you could be.

RICHARD PEARSON II
Campbell, MO

I would like to congratulate you guys for recognizing the inability of "Sick Ric" Flair. I have been waiting for a long time for you to tell the truth about this so-called wrestler. "The Hulkster" could take him in no time. You used to call him a great champion, and at one time he was—until he became one of the "Four Horsebrains," who, by the way, will ruin Luger's career. And that is a shame.

FRED V. LUCAS
London, KY

SOME LIVE QUESTIONS

I'm hoping that you can help me with a problem I have with weekly wrestling shows. The NWA and the AWA seem to be the worst offenders.

First the NWA: At least once a week on their hourly shows, the announcers come out telling you about a great match they'll be showing that hour. But, by the time they get through the wimpy matches and their endless chatter and start the main event, the hour

is over! You feel cheated and, quite frankly, ticked off.

For example, on a July 14 program, there was to be an eight-man tag team cage match with Dusty Rhodes, Nikita Koloff, and The Road Warriors facing The Four Horsemen. First they wasted 11 minutes on a wimpy match, then they showed highlights and talked about it for another 19 minutes. So, by the time they introduced all eight men, the show was over. The fans at home saw nothing

of the "main event" of the show. They're going to lose a lot of viewers if this keeps up.

As for the AWA, they've lost it. ESPN shows an AWA show almost daily at 1 p.m. (Pacific Standard Time), but they're old shows mixed in with new ones. One day Rose and Somers are tag team champions, the next day it's The Midnight Rockers, the next day Rose and Somers again, the next day Boris Zukhov and Soldat

(Continued on page 8)

BETWEEN FALLS

(Continued from page 6)

Ustinov, etc. The same goes for the AWA World champion. One day it's Nick Bockwinkel, one day it's Curt Hennig, and so on. It makes it hard to become an AWA fan when twice in five days you see Col. DeBeers attack Jimmy Snuka "for the first time on TV." They're even showing arena dates from December 1986.

My son and I enjoy watching wrestling, but this makes me want to give it up. Also, why don't TV titleholders ever defend the titles against worthy opponents on TV? If they can't do this, then why have TV titles?

LISA ZAMORA
Los Angeles

HE'S GOT THEM COVERED

Since you are approaching your 100th issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, I thought you might be interested in the following information.

Of the 98 issues thus far, the wrestler to appear on the most covers was Dusty Rhodes, who was on 17 covers. Ric Flair appeared on 15 covers, and Hulk Hogan was on 14 covers.

Since covers are what sell magazines, I think this will tell you who were the most popular wrestlers during the PWI years to date.

Bob Backlund appeared on eight covers, which is interesting since he has not been active for

most of the past four years. I feel this says something about his popularity.

Five wrestlers appeared on six different covers, three wrestlers appeared on five different covers, five wrestlers appeared on four different covers; nine wrestlers appeared on three different covers; seven wrestlers appeared on two different covers, and 36 wrestlers appeared on one cover each.

Keep up the good work for another 100 issues, and congratulations on reaching a milestone.

GEORGE SCHIRE
St. Paul, MN

A HEALTHY PARTNERSHIP

Finally the NWA and UWF have started wrestling together, making the month of July the best for wrestling fans this year!

If the UWF is smart, they'll become a permanent part of the NWA and the World Championship area. A wrestler like Steve Williams could be a major contender for Ric Flair's NWA World belt. Dusty Rhodes or Nikita Koloff could be a real serious threat to the UWF title.

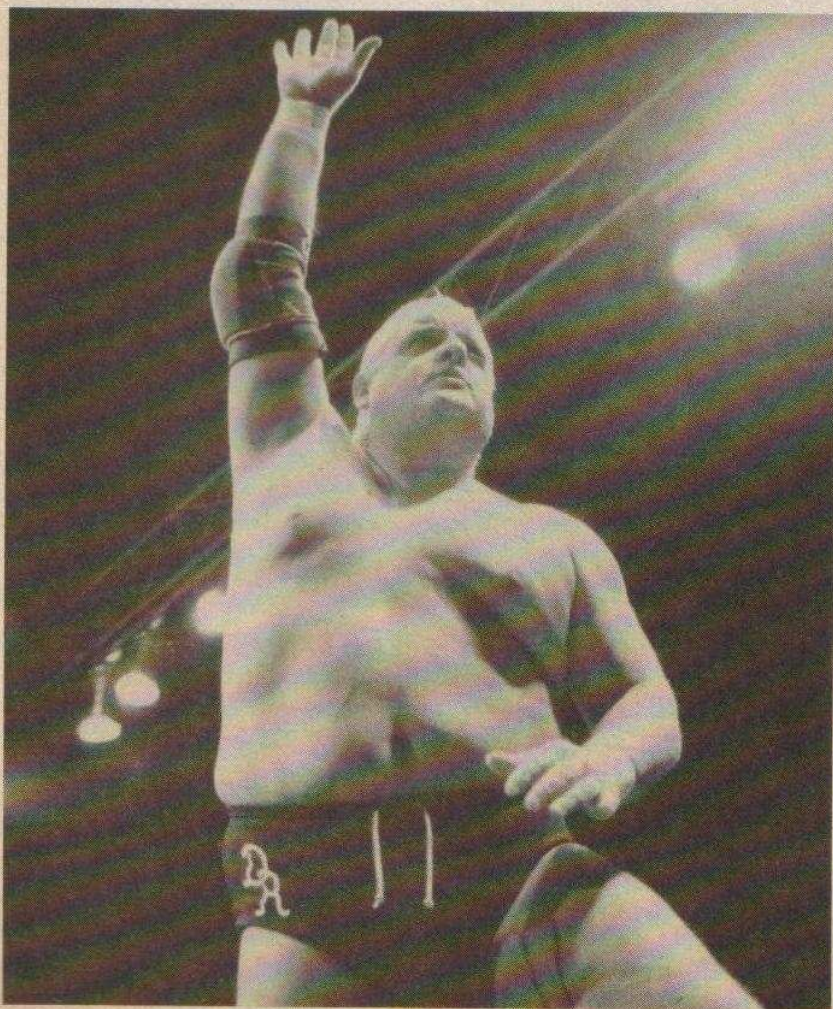
From what I've seen, the NWA and UWF have similar styles of wrestling. Together, they could be bigger and much better than the WWF or any other organization.

TRACY KALVIN
Harrisburg, VA

SIGNING OFF

After earning the fans' respect with WrestleMania III, Vince McMahon and the WWF have reverted to their old ways. Recently, TV viewers have endured Billy Graham's surgery (shown repeatedly in bloody detail), Missy Hyatt's non-appearance, Ted DiBiase's impersonation of Ric Flair (and the Heenan Family's ripoff of The Four Horsemen), and the impending

(Continued on page 84)



Dusty Rhodes has appeared on more covers of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* than any other wrestler. George Schire writes that this is an indication of Dusty's popularity.

RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter

CAN MONEY BUY anything? **Ted DiBiase**, "The Million Dollar Man," seems to think so, and he's going out of his way to prove it in the WWF. Obviously, the DiBiase fans are seeing in the WWF is much different from the DiBiase who was an outstanding wrestler in the UWF.

On recent WWF TV shows, DiBiase was shown paying off a receptionist in a hospital for immediate medical attention, tipping a maitre d' in a restaurant to avoid waiting on

line, and giving a large sum of money to a public pool attendant to close it so that DiBiase could have it for himself. But DiBiase might have hit rock bottom with his latest antic: he gave a child \$300 for kissing his bodyguard **Virgil's** shoes.

Unfortunately, DiBiase seems more worried about showing off his money than his considerable wrestling skills. He's made very few appearances in the ring, although rumor has it that he's trying to buy a title shot with

World champion **Hulk Hogan**. DiBiase hasn't even established himself as a contender, but as we've all seen, everybody really **does** have their price for "The Million Dollar Man."

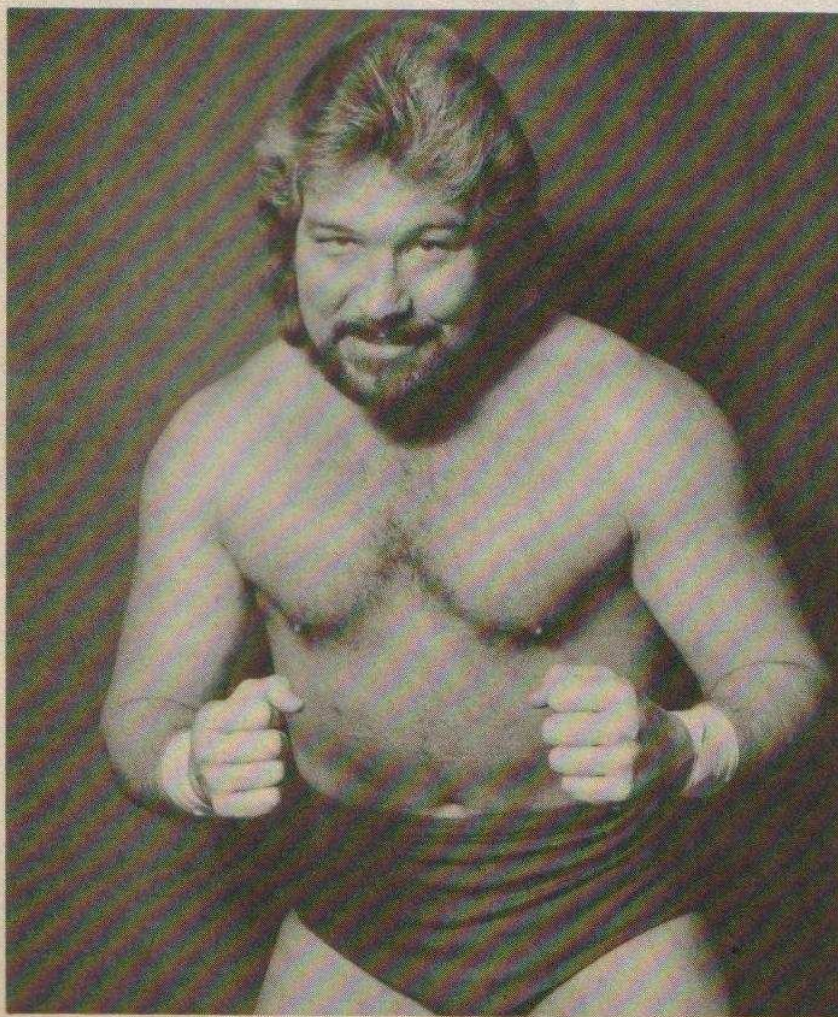
Rookie **Shane Douglas** defeated **Eddie Gilbert** for the UWF TV title on August 3 in Morgan City, Louisiana. **Sting** was originally scheduled to wrestle Gilbert for the title, but he was sneak-attacked by **Terry Taylor** as he made his way to the ring and suffered a severe head injury.

Moments later, Douglas came to ringside and offered to replace Sting. Thinking he had an easy match, Gilbert accepted, but it turned out to be an evenly fought battle. When referee **Ed Falk** was knocked out in a collision, Sting returned to the ring with his head bandaged. Sting clotheslined Gilbert and Douglas bodypressed the champion. Falk woke up just in time to see Douglas pin Gilbert for the belt.

Legendary Houston wrestling promoter **Paul Boesch** has announced his retirement. Boesch was active in the sport as a wrestler and promoter for over 55 years and will stay on with the WWF in an advisory role. A huge WWF card in his honor is planned for August 28 at the Sam Houston Coliseum. Paul was one of the most philanthropic human beings I've ever met, and one of the greatest wrestling promoters ever. I wish him well.

There's always something unusual happening in the Mid-Southern area. On August 1, **Jerry Lawler** and **Rocky Johnson** and enemies **Brickhouse Brown** and **Don Bass** agreed to a "Price Is Right" match. Each team could pick what they

(Continued on page 78)



Wrestling's self-proclaimed "Million Dollar Man," Ted DiBiase, is convinced that money really can buy anything, including a shot at Hulk Hogan's WWF World title. DiBiase and his bodyguard, Virgil, have gone overboard with their antics.

from the desk of. . .

Stuart M. Saks

As I write "From The Desk Of . . ." this special 100th issue celebration is almost complete. Everything is written, edited, and proofread. Everybody is gone from the building except for me and the night janitor. It's awfully quiet for an office that just minutes ago was in a frantic state.

Looking through the binders containing the previous 99 issues of PWI, I am getting a strange feeling. Perhaps it's the emptiness of the building, but I just don't feel like celebrating and writing another column congratulating ourselves on being the number-one wrestling magazine in the world.

There are a lot of good memories in these issues I'm thumbing through. A lot of terrific people have put their creative talents together to make PWI what it is today, and I've had good times with all of them. But somehow the celebration seems a little hollow now that a lot of those people are no longer here. They deserve a tip of the hat, because without them, PWI would not be the same magazine it is today.

Gary Morgenstein, "Morgy" as we called him, was the head writer for PWI when I came to work here 97 issues ago. That was in our pre-computer years, and I remember looking across the office at Morgy as he pecked away at his manual typewriter with three fingers (the two index fingers and the middle finger on his right hand). In the time it took me to write one story, he had knocked off three and was on the phone making arrangements for his next trip. Morgy and I used to car pool to work every day, and I value the knowledge he passed along to me in those 45-minute bumper-to-bumper trips. Here's to you Morgy, wherever you are.

Joseph Bua came here in 1982 as a stock boy. I never even knew he could write his name until word spread around the office that Joan Rivers had purchased a joke that he had submitted to her. Having my first serious discussion with him, I learned he studied journalism, dreamed of being a screenwriter, and was just lifting boxes to earn a few bucks. For the heck of it, I gave him a story to do and it showed tremendous promise. I considered Joe Bua to be my personal project after that. I would love to take credit for the great success he had with PWI, but that would be distorting the truth. Joe worked hard to reach the level that he did, and today he is putting forth that same effort in Hollywood in pursuit of his dream. Knowing him, I have no doubt he'll

(Continued on page 88)

WFOCUS

With CRAIG PETERS

EVERY SILVER LINING HAS A TOUCH OF GRAY

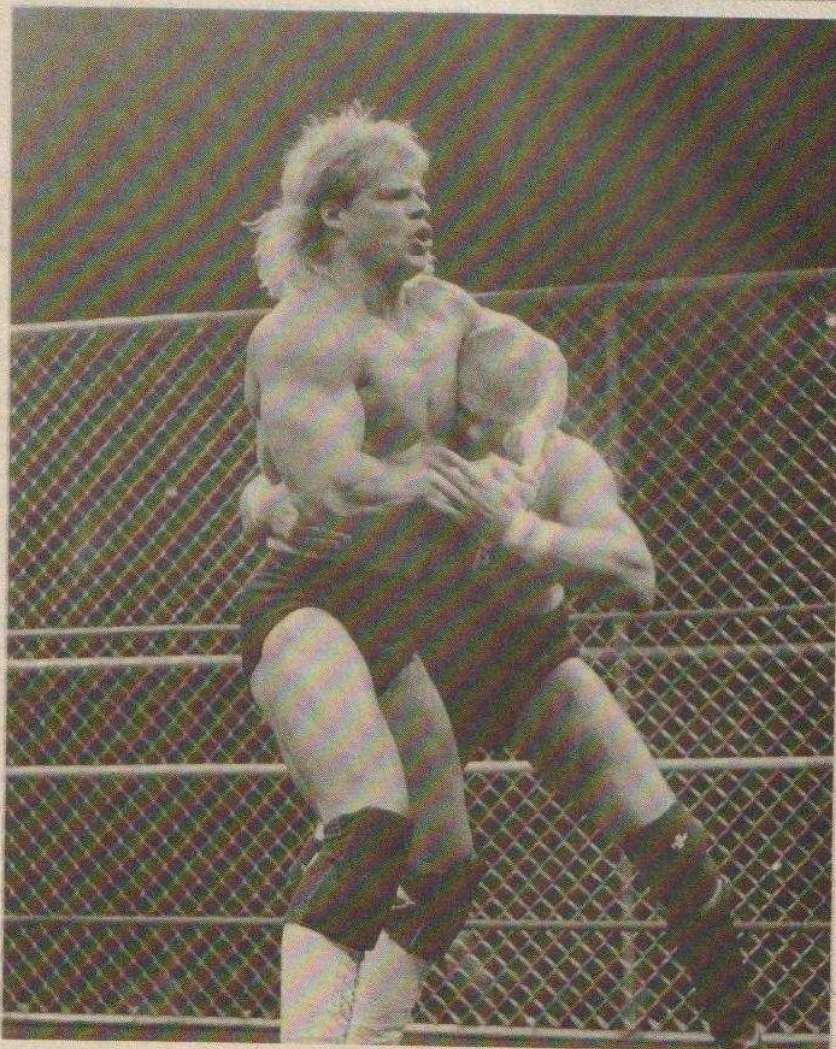
That headline may be the lyric of a new Grateful Dead song, but it's also an indication that there's always a bit of a downside whenever there's a celebration.

In the case of this 100th issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, the downside is that even though we're presenting a very special look back at what we've called "The *PWI* Years," we don't have room to feature what we usually do in our December issue: The Great American Bash.

So what we've done is to split our special *PWI* section on The Great American Bash into two magazines: *Wrestling Superstars* and *Sports Review Wrestling*.

The Winter 1987 edition of *Wrestling Superstars* will feature a full-length story on the Bash, plus a very special four-page color section highlighting the most dynamic action-packed photographs from many of the best Bash cards this summer.

The November 1987 edition of *Sports Review Wrestling* will include a very special photo section highlighting all the top matches and best action from the best of the Bash extravaganzas around the country.

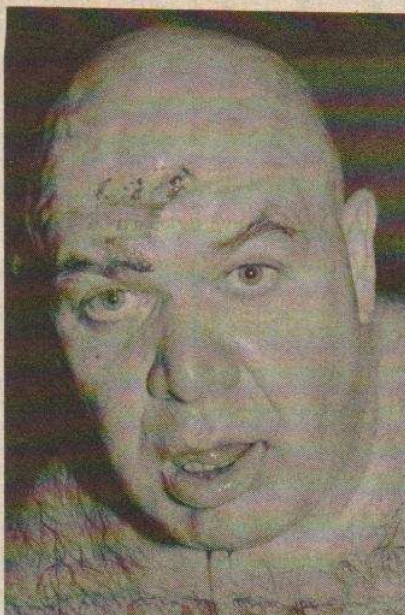


Lex Luger headlocks Nikita Koloff at The Great American Bash

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE . . .

One of the "In Focus" items in my very first column, back in the December 1981 issue, concerned television interviews:

According to broadcasting friends of mine, there are some major problems developing regarding on-air interviews during televised wrestling matches. In particular, these problems have to do with George "The Animal" Steele. It seems as if Steele has the unnerving habit of staring and drooling into the camera while he searches for appropriate words from his limited vocabulary to answer the announcer's question. Not only are the cameramen disturbed by this, but the director and producer of these interviews are getting frustrated. It appears



A drooling George Steele

that certain unnamed advertisers are considering withdrawal of their sponsorship if Steele is not prevented from, in their words, "wasting valuable commercial air time." According to one broadcasting official, however, "Steele deserves to have his views heard no matter how long it takes. There are plenty of other sponsors around." Bravo for the station: let the advertisers go elsewhere.

Things haven't changed much. Today, though, the biggest interview problem isn't a slobbering George Steele, it's an obnoxious Ric Flair. I don't want to get into it. But I'd rather see Steele drool than Flair babble about Space Mountain any day of the week.

SPECIAL APPRECIATION

I may not be Bill Apter. I wasn't there when the first issue of *PWI* hit the newsstands. The first issue I worked on was the December 1981 edition. But in six years, I've seen *PWI* grow and develop and thrive like no other magazine in the world.

The behind-the-scenes look at *PWI* on page 26 will give you a little more insight into what goes into the making of a special issue like this—or any issue of *PWI* in general. But I think special appreciation should be extended to some people who did an absolutely superb job on this magazine:

Ken Morgan, Darlene Saks, and Charles Foster deserve the credit for making this issue look as good as it does. Being handed a fistful of photos and a length of type three feet long is one thing; knowing what to do with those

photos and that type in order to make it look attractive on the printed page is a very special talent, indeed.

Dave Rosenbaum, Andy Rodriguez, and Gian Trotta are the people responsible for much of the research and the writing that went into this issue. Scanning back over every page of 100 issues of *PWI*, checking and double-checking facts (are you *sure* that happened in 1980, or was it 1982?), and coming up with new ideas (like this issue's special "Arena Report") are what these guys are all about. They did one hell of a job.

Stu Saks edits, checks, and rechecks *everything* before it goes into the magazine; the final responsibility for every word and photo on every page rests with him.

Bill Apter is now, as he's al-

ways been, the lifeblood of *PWI*. Enough said.

PWI is, of course, a team effort. And the biggest member of that team is you: our readers. Your direct influence is seen all over this issue: in the poll results on page 62, the fan awards retrospective on page 29, and in the "Unofficial/Official" awards on page 61—to name but a few examples. I know I speak for the entire staff when I say that you readers are the reason why we keep trying harder, working to improve each issue of *PWI*. There's a huge difference between this month's issue and the September 1979 edition of *PWI*.

I'm sure that when our 200th issue rolls around (the cover date of that one will be April 1996!), things will be even better.

Stick around. It's bound to be an exciting journey. □

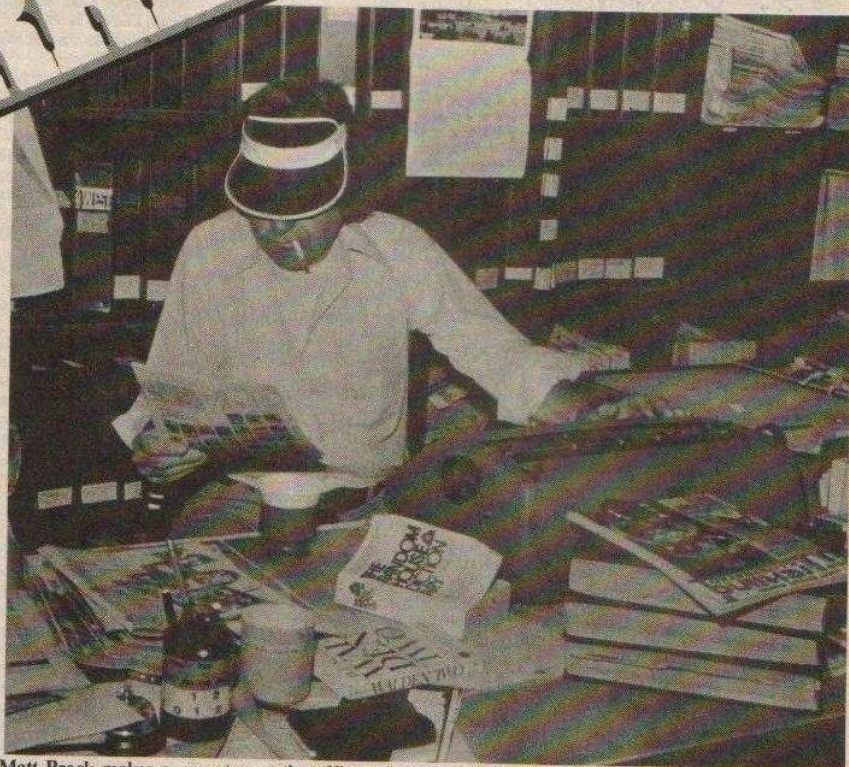
NO HOLDS BARRED

with David Rosenbaum

THERE ARE LEGENDS of sportswriting, just like there are legends of professional wrestling, baseball, football, hockey, and horse racing. Names such as Grantland Rice, Red Smith, Jimmy Cannon, and Dave Anderson will be forever remembered and respected as the elite of their class, the greatest sportswriters of all time.

Before I came to *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* and its family of magazines in March 1986, I had heard of, but never met, Matt Brock. The journalism circle is rather tight, and Brock's name was often mentioned—sometimes negatively, but usually admiringly—by older writers. Brock's life and work are legend. He fulfills the stereotype of a sportswriter: Often hungover, he'll sit in the press box with a big cup of black coffee, trying to get through the evening. After bumbling through a post-match interview and stumbling back to his typewriter, Brock will write a story that puts to shame anything offered by the more coherent journalists. He is, in a word, amazing.

Upon my arrival here, my first request of Editor-in-Chief Peter King was an opportunity to meet Brock. I was disappointed to learn



Matt Brock makes a rare stop at the offices of *PWI*. Brock, who does most of his work away from the office, is a true legend of sportswriting. Despite too many years of drinking and smoking, Brock has set a standard of excellence that is almost matchless.

that Brock does most of his work outside the office and only comes in for a rare editorial staff meeting. He's constantly on the road. And with modern technology, he can easily send his monthly columns and stories by telephone. Yes, even Matt Brock has entered the computer age.

It's unfortunate that Brock doesn't have a monthly column in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, but with his monthly column for *Inside Wrestling* and bi-monthly column for *The Wrestler*, he can only fit an occasional article for this magazine into his hectic schedule. Besides, Matt is a little older now and the rigors of the road have

taken their toll on his aging body. Brock has never taken good care of his body; now time is taking care of Brock.

Although Brock rarely comes up to the office, I had the chance to meet him a number of times while on the road. We didn't speak much—Brock doesn't have much use for young, sober wrestling writers, especially those who prefer to gamble on his beloved sport—but just by watching him in action, I realized right away that Brock deserved a place alongside the greats of journalism.

His years of experience have nothing to do with it. Instantly, it's
(Continued on page 86)

BY EDDIE ELLNER

off the Top Rope

If you wish to contribute to Ellner's mailbag,
send your letters to:

TOP ROPE, Box 48, Rockville Centre, NY 11571



[Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Eddie Ellner himself. They do not necessarily represent the editorial views of this magazine.]

I'M TEMPTED TO declare Associate Editor Dave Rosenbaum the winner of the "Giant Idiot" contest for remarks made in his October 1987 column. After an enthusiastic description of "Ben the Bookie," in which he glorified the life of a professional criminal, Rosenbaum concludes his column with a question: "What effect could gambling have on professional wrestling?" His answer [referring to the possibility of wrestlers "throwing matches"]: "Professional wrestlers have too much respect for their abilities and the integrity of the sport. And they make far too much money to be enticed by the temptations of those who would lead them down the path of evil."

Rosenbaum is dead wrong. Assuming their hefty salaries will insulate them from illegal activities is absurd. Equally absurd is his attribution of superior integrity to professional wrestlers. Men like Ric Flair or Abdullah the Butcher or Dusty Rhodes have all the integrity of rats; they'd sell their own children for an extra buck.

Rosenbaum's subtle encouragement of gambling is outrageous. Betting a couple of bucks on a match appears to

be a harmless enterprise. But appearances are inevitably deceiving (I once thought Rosenbaum was intelligent). So tell Ben the Bookie he's got a date with the Ninth Precinct if I ever meet him. On to the mail.

Dear Eddie,

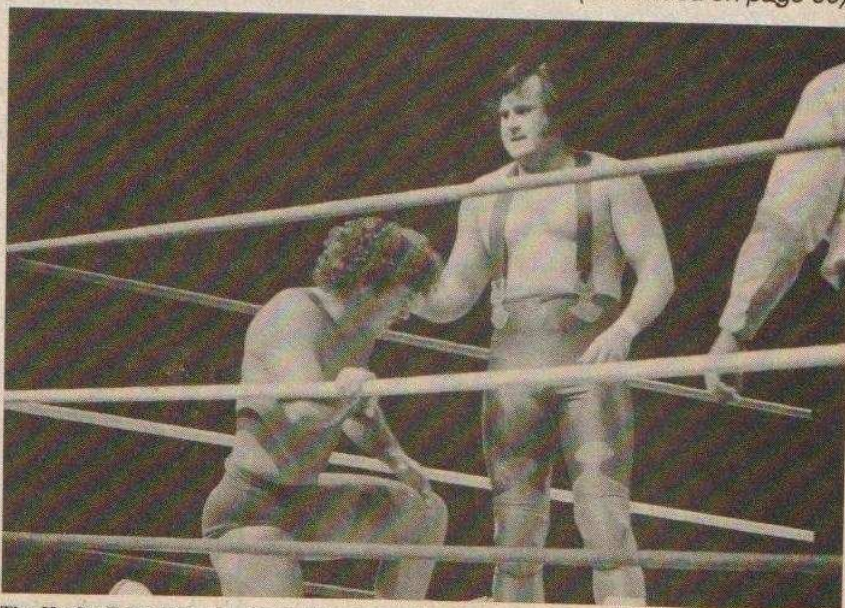
I'm glad to see a wrestling magazine that has a column like yours. I'm sick of only "good guy" opinions. I think you have the best column by far. What is your opinion of my favorite wrestler, The Honky Tonk Man?

MORGAN WINFACE
Wheeling, WV

Dear Morgan,

The Honky Tonk Man is another mediocre wrestler—ala Brutus Beefcake and Cpl. Kirchner—who is mysteriously positioned favorably in the minds of critics and fans. For some reason, these men appear indigenous to the WWF. Let us all not be deceived. HTM's victory over Rick Steamboat was a fluke. Steamboat, preoccupied by God knows what, was wrestling on some other planet. The Honky Tonk Man is not immune to gravity. He will come crashing down to his planet—Planet Preliminary—very soon.

(Continued on page 90)

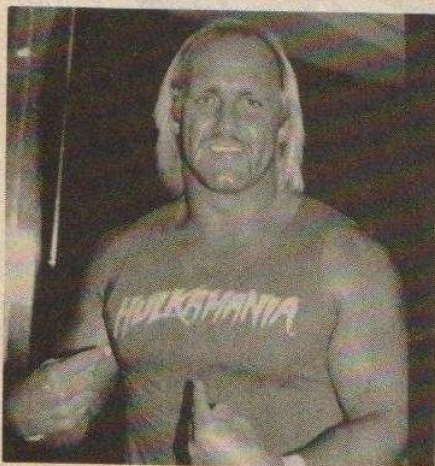


The Honky Tonk Man may be having an easy time against Lanny Poffo, but that doesn't prove anything. HTM is nothing more than a glorified prelim bum. His victory over Rick Steamboat for the Intercontinental belt was a total fluke.

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

T.V. SPORTS

PWI's TOP 10



Hulk Hogan

TOP 10

- 1 RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
NWA World champion
- 2 HULK HOGAN**
302, Venice Beach, CA
WWF World champion
- 3 LEX LUGER**
268, Chicago, IL
U.S. heavyweight champion
- 4 STEVE WILLIAMS**
265, Norman, OK
UWF heavyweight champion
- 5 BARRY WINDHAM**
236, Sweetwater, TX
Western States champion
- 6 NIKITA KOLOFF**
275, Moscow, Russia
No. 1 contender to U.S. title
- 7 RANDY SAVAGE**
245, Sarasota, FL
No. 1 contender to WWF I-C title
- 8 CURT HENNIG**
235, Minneapolis, MN
AWA World champion
- 9 MIKE ROTUNDO**
245, Syracuse, NY
Florida heavyweight champion
- 10 KEVIN VON ERICH**
235, Denton, TX
World Class heavyweight champion

TAG TEAMS

- 1 THE ROAD WARRIORS**
Combined weight: 567 pounds
No. 2 contenders to NWA tag team title
- 2 BRETT HART & JIM NEIDHART**
Combined weight: 515 pounds
WWF World tag team champions
- 3 THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS**
Combined weight: 453 pounds
NWA World tag team champions
- 4 THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS**
Combined weight: 453 pounds
U.S. tag team champions
- 5 TULLY BLANCHARD & ARN ANDERSON**
Combined weight: 484 pounds
No. 3 contenders to NWA tag team title
- 6 THE BRITISH BULLDOGS**
Combined weight: 461 pounds
No. 1 contenders to WWF tag team title
- 7 TIM HORNER & BRAD ARMSTRONG**
Combined weight: 461 pounds
UWF tag team champions
- 8 THE SHEEPHERDERS**
Combined weight: 542 pounds
Florida tag team champions
- 9 THE FANTASTICS**
Combined weight: 462 pounds
No. 1 contenders to WCCW tag team title
- 10 DINO BRAVO & GREG VALENTINE**
Combined weight: 493 pounds
No. 2 contenders to WWF tag team title

NWA

World Champion:
RIC FLAIR

243, Minneapolis, MN

- 1—LEX LUGER**
268, Chicago, IL
- 2—NIKITA KOLOFF**
275, Moscow, Russia
- 3—DUSTY RHODES**
302, Austin, TX
- 4—TULLY BLANCHARD**
235, San Antonio, TX
- 5—BARRY WINDHAM**
236, Sweetwater, TX
- 6—RONNIE GARVIN**
231, Montreal, Quebec
- 7—MIKE ROTUNDO**
245, Syracuse, NY
- 8—JIM GARVIN**
235, Tampa, FL
- 9—ROAD WARRIOR ANIMAL**
288, Chicago, IL
- 10—HERCULES AYALA**
260, San Juan, Puerto Rico

AWA

World Champion:
CURT HENNIG

235, Minneapolis, MN

- 1—NICK BOCKWINKEL**
245, Beverly Hills, CA
- 2—GREG GAGNE**
220, Robbinsdale, MN
- 3—LARRY ZBYSKO**
248, Pittsburgh, PA
- 4—WAHOO McDANIEL**
260, Midland, TX
- 5—TOMMY RICH**
242, Hendersonville, TN
- 6—JERRY LAWLER**
234, Memphis, TN
- 7—KEVIN KELLY**
271, Oakland, CA
- 8—D.J. PETERSON**
245, St. Joseph, MO
- 9—ADRIAN ADONIS**
312, New York, NY
- 10—SUPER NINJA**
263, Japan

WWF

World Champion:
HULK HOGAN

302, Venice Beach, CA

- 1—THE HONKY TONK MAN**
255, Memphis, TN
- 2—RANDY SAVAGE**
245, Sarasota, FL
- 3—KILLER KHAN**
275, Mongolia
- 4—HARLEY RACE**
258, Kansas City, MO
- 5—HERCULES HERNANDEZ**
275, Tampa, FL
- 6—KEN PATERA**
245, Portland, OR
- 7—ONE MAN GANG**
468, Chicago, IL
- 8—RICK STEAMBOAT**
238, Honolulu, HI
- 9—PAUL ORNDORFF**
253, Brandon, FL
- 10—BAM BAM BIGELOW**
368, Mt. Laurel, NJ

UWF

UWF Champion:
STEVE WILLIAMS

265, Norman, OK

- 1—BARRY WINDHAM**
236, Sweetwater, TX
- 2—DICK MURDOCH**
270, Waxahachie, TX
- 3—EDDIE GILBERT**
222, Lexington, KY
- 4—MICHAEL HAYES**
255, Atlanta, GA
- 5—CHRIS ADAMS**
228, Stratford, England
- 6—TERRY GORDY**
289, Chattanooga, TN
- 7—STING**
270, parts unknown
- 8—BIG BUBBA ROGERS**
348, Louisville, KY
- 9—SHANE DOUGLAS**
223, Pittsburgh, PA
- 10—SHASKA WHATLEY**
238, El Paso, TX

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings.

MOST POPULAR

1	HULK HOGAN 302, Venice Beach, CA Last month: No. 1 Most Popular
2	DUSTY RHODES 302, Austin, TX Last month: No. 3 Most Popular
3	NIKITA KOLOFF 275, Moscow, Russia Last month: No. 2 Most Popular
4	STEVE WILLIAMS 265, Norman, OK Last month: No. 4 Most Popular
5	RICK STEAMBOAT 238, Honolulu, HI Last month: unrated
6	CHRIS ADAMS 228, Stratford, England Last month: unrated
7	BARRY WINDHAM 236, Sweetwater, TX Last month: No. 6 Most Popular
8	KEN PATERA 245, Portland, OR Last month: No. 5 Most Popular
9	KEVIN VON ERICH 235, Denton, TX Last month: unrated
10	JERRY LAWLER 234, Memphis, TN Last month: No. 8 Most Popular

MOST HATED

1	RIC FLAIR 243, Minneapolis, MN Last month: No. 1 Most Hated
2	THE HONKY TONK MAN 255, Memphis, TN Last month: No. 2 Most Hated
3	LEX LUGER 268, Chicago, IL Last month: No. 4 Most Hated
4	TULLY BLANCHARD 235, San Antonio, TX Last month: No. 3 Most Hated
5	DICK MURDOCH 270, Waxahachie, TX Last month: unrated
6	CURT HENNIG 235, Minneapolis, MN Last month: No. 6 Most Hated
7	LARRY ZBYSZKO 248, Pittsburgh, PA Last month: No. 7 Most Hated
8	KILLER KHAN 248, Mongolia Last month: unrated
9	TED DIBIASE 247, Omaha, NE Last month: No. 10 Most Hated
10	DORY FUNK JR. 237, Amarillo, TX Last month: No. 9 Most Hated

For period ended August 6, 1987

WORLD CHAMP.

U.S. Champion:

LEX LUGER 268, Chicago, IL
1— TULLY BLANCHARD 235, San Antonio, TX
2— NIKITA KOLOFF 275, Moscow, Russia
3— DUSTY RHODES 302, Austin, TX
4— BARRY WINDHAM 236, Sweetwater, TX
5— ARN ANDERSON 249, Minneapolis, MN
6— RONNIE GARVIN 231, Montreal, Quebec
7— IVAN KOLOFF 240, Moscow, Russia
8— VLADIMIR PETROV 281, Moscow, Russia
9— LAZOR-TRON 220, parts unknown
10— RON SIMMONS 260, Perry, GA

WORLD CLASS

World Class Champion:

KEVIN VON ERICH 235, Denton, TX
1— AL PEREZ 238, Tampa, FL
2— BRIAN ADIAS 238, Denton, TX
3— TONY ATLAS 247, Roanoke, VA
4— AL MADRIL 231, Los Angeles, CA
5— TED ARCIDI 300, Boston, MA
6— STEVE SIMPSON 230, Johannesburg, South Africa
7— BRUISER BRODY 284, Albuquerque, NM
8— MATT BORNE 235, Portland, OR
9— THE SPOILER 255, Singapore
10— ERIC EMBRY 225, Lexington, KY

FLORIDA

Florida Champion:
MIKE ROTUNDO

245, Syracuse, NY
1— DORY FUNK JR. 240, Amarillo, TX
2— KEVIN SULLIVAN 252, Boston, MA
3— ED GANTNER 269, Tampa, FL
4— RON SIMMONS 260, Perry, GA
5— SHASKA WHATLEY 238, El Paso, TX
6— MIKE GRAHAM 232, Tampa, FL
7— TEIHO KHAN 232, Singapore
8— BUGSY McGRAW 268, New York, NY
9— TERRY FUNK 241, Amarillo, TX
10— LAZOR-TRON 220, parts unknown

MID-SOUTHERN

AWA Southern Champion:
DON BASS

230, Memphis, TN
1— JERRY LAWLER 234, Memphis, TN
2— BRICKHOUSE BROWN 225, Winter Haven, FL
3— BILL DUNDEE 214, Melbourne, Australia
4— JEFF JARRETT 200, Hendersonville, TN
5— ROCKY JOHNSON 230, Halifax, Nova Scotia
6— MOONDOG SPOT 235, parts unknown
7— PAT TANAKA 265, Honolulu, HI
8— PAUL DIAMOND 235, Thunder Bay, Ont.
9— BILLY TRAVIS 218, Houston, TX
10— GOLIATH 420, Pittsburgh, PA

CONTINENTAL

Continental Champion:
WENDELL COOLEY

220, Milton, FL
1— DUTCH MANTEL 224, Oil Trough, TX
2— THE BULLET 234, parts unknown
3— SCOTT ARMSTRONG 225, Marietta, GA
4— MIKE GOLDEN 238, Oklahoma City, OK
5— TOM PRITCHARD 220, Houston, TX
6— MR. WRESTLING II 246, Atlanta, GA
7— BUDDY LANDELL 236, Los Angeles, CA
8— JIMMY GOLDEN 235, Montgomery, AL
9— ROBERT FULLER 238, Dyresburg, TN
10— MR. OLYMPIA 242, parts unknown

PUERTO RICO

WWC Champion:
HERCULES AYALA

260, San Juan, Puerto Rico
1— CARLOS COLON 246, Santa Isabel, PR
2— TNT 242, parts unknown
3— INVADER I 227, San Lorenzo, PR
4— TERRY FUNK 241, Amarillo, TX
5— ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER 360, Sudan
6— BRUISER BRODY 284, Albuquerque, NM
7— STAN HANSEN 322, Borge, TX
8— DORY FUNK JR. 240, Amarillo, TX
9— TONY ATLAS 247, Roanoke, VA
10— JASON THE TERRIBLE 244, parts unknown

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating more than 150 wrestlers in 14 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

Where it all began, where it is today. Pro Wrestling Illustrated has come a long way since its first issue was published back in 1979, but no one feature has developed and changed more than the ratings. There were only six ratings categories in that first issue and no "Ratings Analysis."

As the sport—and *PWI*—grew, more ratings categories were added. "Ratings Analysis" was introduced in the September 1983 issue. In that same issue, the ratings were expanded to include 14 categories.

We thought it might be interesting to turn back the pages of time and take a look at the ratings from that September 1979 first issue of *PWI*. Some of the names you might recognize, others are long gone from the sport, and some are still among the elite of wrestling.



Bob Backlund

WWF: 1—Bob Backlund; 2—Pat Patterson; 3—Greg Valentine; 4—Hussein (The Iron Sheik) Arab; 5—Ivan Putski; 6—Ted DiBiase; 7—Bulldog Brower; 8—Jim Valiant; 9—Peter Maivia; 10—Steve Travis.

NWA: 1—Harley Race; 2—Dusty Rhodes; 3—Ric Flair; 4—Ken Patera; 5—Jim Garvin; 6—Masked Superstar; 7—Rick Steamboat; 8—Mark Lewin; 9—Mike Graham; 10—Ron Fuller.

AWA: 1—Nick Bockwinkel; 2—Verne Gagne; 3—Greg Gagne; 4—Jim Brunzell; 5—Billy Robinson; 6—Crusher; 7—Super Destroyer II; 8—Ray Stevens; 9—Pat Patterson; 10—Mighty Igor.

TAG TEAMS: 1—The Valiant Brothers; 2—Paul Jones & Baron Von Raschke; 3—Pat Patterson & Ray Stevens; 4—Ken Patera & John Studd; 5—Ole Anderson & Ivan Koloff; 6—Mike Graham & Steve Keirn; 7—Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell; 8—Spoiler & Mark Lewin; 9—Bob Orton Jr. & Dick Slater; 10—Eddy Mansfield & Leroy Brown.

MOST POPULAR: 1—Dusty Rhodes; 2—Andre the Giant; 3—Rick Steamboat; 4—Ivan Putski; 5—Mr. Wrestling II; 6—Bob Backlund; 7—Mike Graham; 8—Mil Mascaras; 9—Tommy Rich; 10—Jim Garvin.

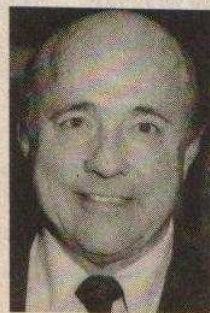
MOST HATED: 1—Ric Flair; 2—Greg Valentine; 3—Paul Jones; 4—Ken Patera; 5—Masked Superstar; 6—Nick Bockwinkel; 7—Abdullah the Butcher; 8—Super Destroyer II; 9—Killer Khan; 10—Mr. Fuji.

There are numerous interesting observations to make from these ratings. **Ted DiBiase** has gone full circle since our first issue, when he was rated sixth in the WWF ratings. He's now back in the WWF and ready to make a run at World champion **Hulk Hogan**. **Bob Backlund** and **Pat Patterson** have retired, but **Greg Valentine** is still playing a major role in the WWF tag team scene. But whatever happened to **Ivan Putski** and **Bulldog Brower**? **Jim Valiant** is, of course, the popular "Boogie Woogie Man" in the NWA, **Peter Maivia** has since died, and **Steve Travis** was crippled in a tragic car accident.

Harley Race was NWA World champion back then and is still a

top contender in the WWF. We all know about **Dusty Rhodes** and **Ric Flair**, but so much has happened to **Ken Patera** since that first issue. He's been to the WWF, the AWA, jail, and back to the WWF since then. And he's become a fan favorite. **Jim Garvin** is now a fan favorite and **Masked Superstar** has vanished from the wrestling world. **Rick Steamboat** left the NWA, became WWF Intercontinental champion, had a child with his wife **Bonnie**, and is now trying to regain the Intercontinental belt. **Mark Lewin** is wrestling in Hawaii, **Mike Graham** is wrestling in Florida, and **Ron Fuller** is still in the Continental area.

There are plenty of interesting names in the AWA. **Nick Bockwinkel** has lost and regained the AWA World championship three times since our first issue and is now a top contender for **Curt Hennig's**



Verne Gagne

title. **Verne Gagne** has retired and now plays a major executive role in the AWA. **Greg Gagne** was the number-two contender to the title in 1979; eight years later, he's still the number-two contender. **Jim Brunzell** is one of **The Killer Bees** in the WWF. **Ray Stevens** retired from wrestling, but has since returned to the AWA.

Perennially loved: Rhodes and Steamboat were in the Most Popular ratings back in 1979 and they're still there today. *Perennially despised:* Eight years later, **Killer Khan** and **Flair** are still in the Most Hated ratings.

Your parents might have been there on vacation ... but did they realize that one of the most entertaining attractions in Puerto Rico is professional wrestling, sanctioned by the World Wrestling Council? Probably not. But Puerto Rican wrestling regularly draws large crowds and presents some of the sport's finest athletes. This month we're happy to feature WWC rankings in our revolving ratings category.

Hercules Ayala, the current WWC heavyweight champion, won the belt from Puerto Rican superstar **Carlos Colon** on July 18 in a Texas Death match. The new junior heavyweight champ is **El Gran Mendoza**, who won the title from **Invader III**. The WWC tag team champions are **TNT & Mr. Pogo**. They defeated **Chris & Mark Youngblood** on July 11. Other champions are: **TNT** (WWC North American champ), **The Hunters** (North American tag team champs), and **Kareem Muhammad** (Puerto Rican heavyweight champion).

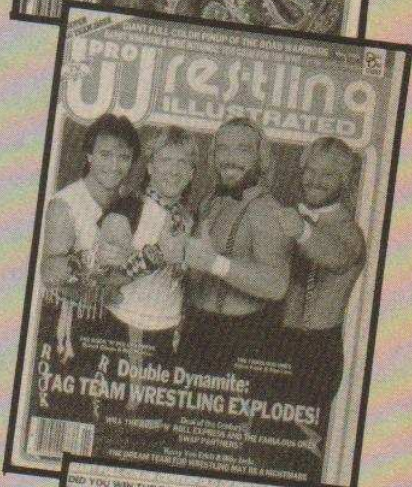
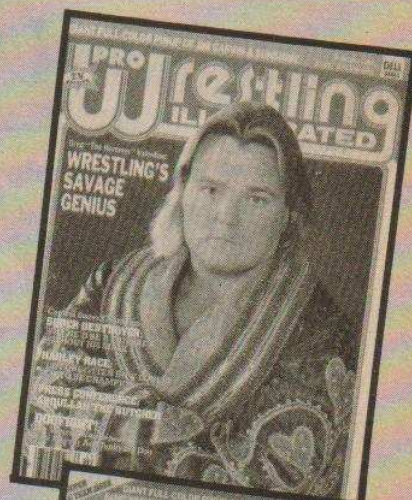
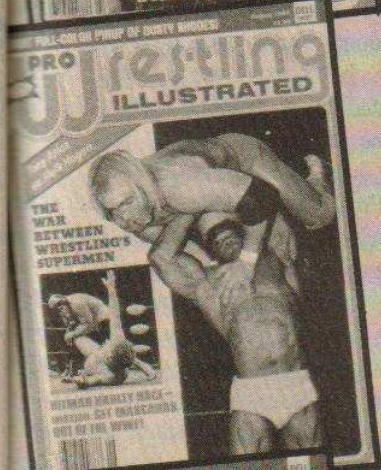
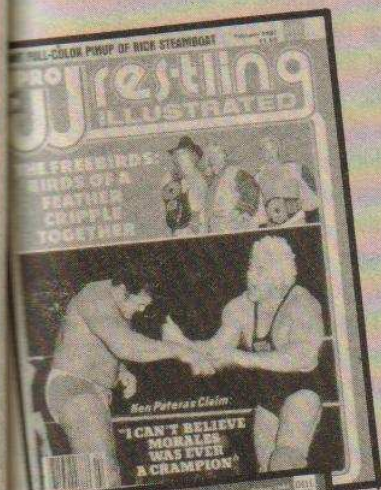
That was then, this is now. And now is the time to send your comments on the ratings and "Ratings Analysis." Send all correspondence to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o Pro Wrestling Illustrated, Box 48, Rockville Centre, NY, 11571.

I★N★T★R★O★D★U★C★T★I★O★N

OUR 100th ISSUE

WELCOME TO THE 100th issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*. It's been more than eight years since former Editor-in-Chief Peter King introduced you to the debut issue of *PWI* by writing, "For those familiar with wrestling magazines, we hope to become an essential part of your wrestling library. For those new to the world of wrestling journalism, we expect to be an old friend in a very short time."

So much has changed since that September 1979 issue, both in the world of professional wrestling and in this magazine. Peter's first "King's Court" column introduced the readers to his staff of Bill
(Continued on page 82)



PWI

A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK

A lot of work goes into the making of a major magazine such as *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*. In this special feature, you'll receive a special behind-the-scenes look at the production of the world's largest-selling wrestling magazine



Art director Ken Morgan designs the cover for *PWI*'s 100th issue. Of the previous 99 *PWI* covers, those most indicative of the last eight years in wrestling were chosen to be shown once again on the cover of this special issue.

FROM TAKING THE photographs to the final page check, the job of putting out a monthly magazine such as *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* is a complicated, arduous process, undertaken by some of the most polished professionals in the business. It is not a job these people take lightly. The finished product you hold in your hand is the result of hundreds of hours of work by the hard working staff of *PWI*.

Pro Wrestling Illustrated has long been the acknowledged leader in wrestling journalism, the most famous magazine the sport has known. And though great care goes into making of its sister publications, editors and writers here treat *PWI* as a rare jewel, each month trying to present the most complete, best-written, most attractive package available.

This 100th issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* presented a most unusual challenge to the editors. Its 100 pages equals the size of our March 1990 year-end awards issue, the biggest in *PWI* history. It also has the same amount of color as the March issue, though the color in this issue is presented in a different format. In fact, some editors commented that this issue hardly looks like *PWI*.

Production of the magazine starts with an editorial meeting at which the editors decide upon the content of the magazine. Recent events in wrestling are discussed and story ideas are presented by the various editors. Senior Editor Bill Apter keeps his finger on the pulse of the wrestling world and has the task of keeping the editors well informed. He's also responsible for deciding which events are worthy of having a photographer assigned to them.

In the case of our 100th issue, the editors decided that the entire edition would be devoted to the anniversary celebration. Various story ideas for the issue were tossed around as the editors strived to put together a package that would best represent the history of the magazine and the sport through what we've come to term "The *PWI* Years." Choosing the 10 most influential wrestlers and 10 biggest events of the *PW*

photographing was not an easy task and took many hours.

After the stories are chosen, they're assigned to different writers. *PWI* uses a system utilized by *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, and other major magazines. Information for the stories is gathered by a researcher or team of researchers. *PWI* staffs every major wrestling card with a reporter and a photographer.

Their notes are then sent on to a writer. Associate Editor Dave Rosenbaum, Assistant Editors Andy Rodriguez and Eddie Ellner, and writers Gian Trotta (a newcomer), Matt Brock (our seasoned veteran), and Liz Hunter handle most of the writing tasks. Individual editors usually conduct and transcribe interviews on their own.

Most of the writing for this special issue was done by Managing Editor Craig Peters, Rosenbaum, Rodriguez, and Trotta. Because there was little outside research necessary for most of the stories in this issue, virtually all of the writing was done in the office. Every back issue of every magazine published here is available in the office, as is an extensive file of wrestling information. The *PWI* office is a storehouse of wrestling knowledge.

After the stories are written, they're sent to Peters and Editor-in-Chief Stu Saks for editing where they are checked for grammar, spelling, sentence structure, style, and—most important—accuracy.

The large volume of color and black and white photos in this issue put stiff demands on our photo staff. Senior Editor Bill Apter and Photo Assistant Roy London searched through our extensive photo file, literally packed to bursting with hundreds of thousands of photos, for those shots that would best compliment the stories in this issue. Black and white negatives were also perused and printed by London and Assistant Photo Editor Kevin McManus. Color film is sent to an outside firm for printing.

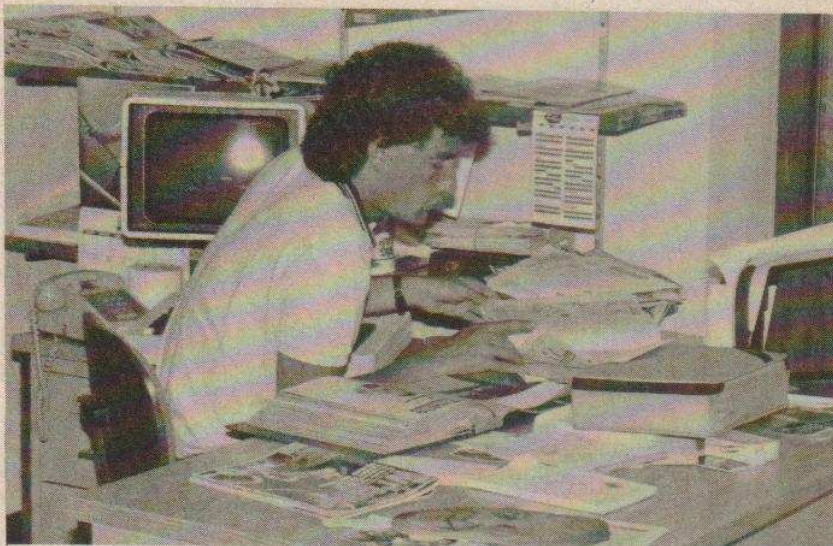
Apter then presents the photos to the editors, who choose the ones for publication. The photos and stories are sent to the art department, where they are pasted onto the pages. This might



Managing Editor Craig Peters and Morgan use a light table to check color slides for clarity. Hundreds of slides were examined in an effort to find the best color photographs for this issue.



Art Associate Darlene Saks does a layout for one of the color pages in our "10 Most Influential Wrestlers" section. How a page looks is often just as important as what it says.



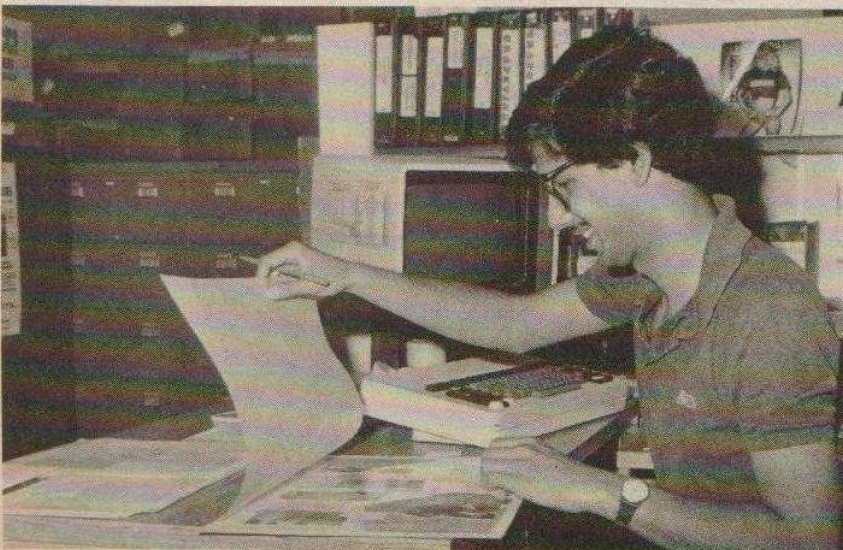
Associate Editor Dave Rosenbaum pores through several back issues to find information and check facts for a story he's writing.



Editor-in-Chief Stu Saks edits a story on the computer terminal. Our computer serves as both a writing tool and a storehouse for an incredible amount of reference information.



Senior Editor Bill Apter gathers photos to go with the stories. The finest wrestling photographers in the country regularly send us their best work.



Assistant Editor Andy Rodriguez proofreads a feature story. We know that if we let a mistake slip by, our eagle-eyed readers will let us know what we missed!

sound easy, but the job performed by Art Director Ken Morgan and Art Associates Charles Foster and Darlene Saks demands great talent. Their job is to make the stories pleasing to the eye so that you'll want to read them. Coming up with innovative layout ideas every month is a difficult task, but they succeed in doing so time and again.

The cover is perhaps the most important page in *PWI*. Without an intriguing cover, newsstand sales will drop off drastically. This month's cover is a celebration of our 100th issue and was designed by Ken Morgan. It includes reduced versions of eight of the most significant covers in *PWI* history.

The wrestling world doesn't stop while we're putting out *PWI*. If a major event or title change occurs while the magazine is being produced, the appropriate additions must be made. Late-breaking news is reserved for Apter's "Ringside" column or "Wrestling Enquirer." News called into the office must be checked and double-checked.

Once the stories are pasted up, they're sent to Andy Rodriguez, who proofreads them and checks once again for factual errors. Rodriguez is also responsible for writing the captions that describe the photos. His job is a vital one. Captions often provide important extra information that the story and photos alone might not contain.

After everything has been pasted up and proofread, it's time for the final page check. The duo of Peters and Rosenbaum, along with Morgan and Saks, checks each page yet again for mistakes and to make sure that all photos and type are properly placed before sending them on to the printer. At this time, any last-minute changes must be made. It's also our last chance to catch an embarrassing error or a photo that doesn't belong.

Finally, the magazine is sent on to the printer. About a month later, the latest issue of *PWI* is on the newsstands or in your mailbox.

And while you're reading this issue, you can be certain that the *PWI* staff is hard at work on another! □

PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

A RETROSPECTIVE



Few honors in pro wrestling are more sought after than the annual *PWI* Achievement Awards. In this special section, we take a look at the past winners of these awards in 11 different categories

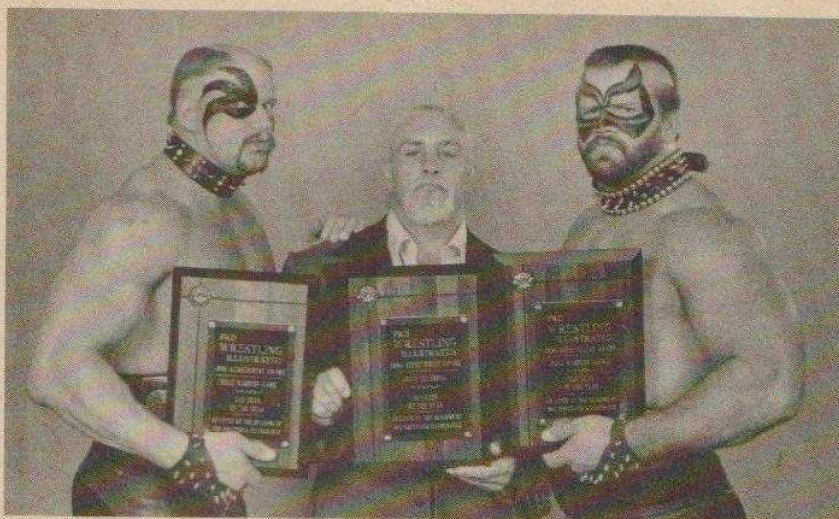
PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED was merely a twinkle in the eyes of Chairman of the Board Stanley Weston when his family of magazines first instituted its annual achievement awards in 1972, based upon the results of an extensive year-end fan poll.

Wrestling was still a decade away from the widespread popularity it would gain in the early 1980s, and awards in eight different categories were printed in the now-defunct *Sports Review Wrestling Annual*. But even back then, these awards were treasured prizes to the wrestlers who earned them. They exemplified outstanding achievement in the sport and

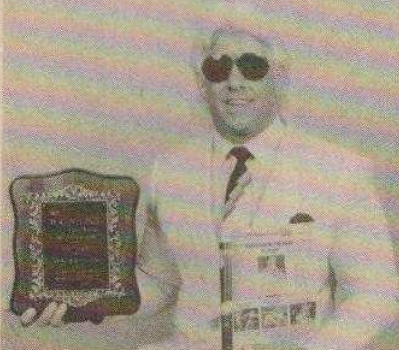
recognition from the fans.

In 1979, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* was born. Three years later, the awards were moved to its pages and renamed the *PWI* Achievement Awards. The annual achievement awards issue has since grown to be our best seller, the most popular single wrestling magazine available anywhere. And the *PWI* Achievement Awards have taken their place alongside the post-season accolades of all other major sports.

Senior Editor Bill Apter recalls the first Achievement Awards in 1972. "It was a very big thing because nobody had ever tried it before," said Apter.



The Road Warriors and Paul Ellering accept their 1984 Achievement Awards for Tag Team of the Year and Manager of the Year, respectively (above). Ric Flair holds his 1986 award for Wrestler of the Year (below left). Verne Gagne (his daughter, Kathy, shown accepting the award), Capt. Lou Albano, and Lex Luger were also winners last year (below right).



"The problem was that wrestling was in an unusual position. It's a year-round sport, unlike other sports, so in a way you couldn't have year-end awards because the years never ended. One of our objectives was to give the wrestling year a beginning and an end. Of course, our biggest objective was to recognize those who were worthy of recognition. We felt that only we could choose the best of all the federations. We kind of took it upon ourselves."

The awards gained immediate respect. Pedro Morales, our first Wrestler of the Year in 1972, once said, "Next to winning the World championship, winning that award was the greatest thing that ever happened to me in wrestling. The fans were always great to me, and to be honored like that was a tremendous feeling."

Over the years, new awards were instituted. In 1978, an award for Most Improved Wrestler was created, and in 1981, the first Editors' Award was presented. This past year, the Feud of the Year category was added, bringing to 11 the total number of categories.

As the awards have grown, so too

have their importance.

At first, the winners were announced only in the pages of our magazines. Several years ago, however, Apter started traveling around the country to personally present the awards to various winners. This past year, the syndicated TV program *Pro Wrestling This Week* devoted virtually an entire one-hour show to the PWI Achievement Awards.

It is interesting to note that NWA World champion Ric Flair leads the wrestling world in number of awards received. Flair has won nine separate Achievement Awards spanning four different categories. Other top finishers include Bruno Sammartino with eight, Bob Backlund with seven, and Dusty Rhodes, Roddy Piper, and Harley Race with five. Surprisingly, Hulk Hogan has won only three, while veteran legend Nick Bockwinkel has won only one.

Here we present complete lists of the award winners. By merely glancing over these lists, one can trace the history of wrestling over the past 15 years. It's a virtual Who's Who of the greats of our sport, just like it was supposed to be from the start. Enjoy! □

WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

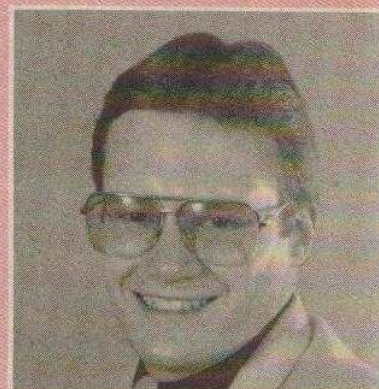
1986: Ric Flair
1985: Ric Flair
1984: Ric Flair
1983: Harley Race
1982: Bob Backlund
1981: Ric Flair
1980: Bob Backlund
1979: Harley Race
1978: Dusty Rhodes
1977: Dusty Rhodes
1976: Terry Funk
1975: Mr. Wrestling II
1974: Bruno Sammartino
1973: Jack Brisco
1972: Pedro Morales

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR

1986: The Rock 'n' Roll Express
1985: The Road Warriors
1984: The Road Warriors
1983: The Road Warriors
1982: Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell
1981: The Fabulous Freebirds
1980: Jimmy Snuka & Ray Stevens
1979: Ivan Putski & Tito Santana
1978: Rick Steamboat & Paul Jones
1977: Gene & Ole Anderson
1976: The Executioners
1975: Gene & Ole Anderson
1974: Jimmy & Johnny Valiant
1973: Nick Bockwinkel & Ray Stevens
1972: Bruiser & Crusher

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

1986: Capt. Lou Albano
1985: Jim Cornette



Jim Cornette

1984: Paul Ellering
1983: James J. Dillon
1982: James J. Dillon
1981: Capt. Lou Albano
1980: Sir Oliver Humperdink
1979: Arnold Skaaland
1978: Arnold Skaaland
1977: The Grand Wizard
1976: Bobby Heenan
1975: George "Crybaby" Cannon
1974: Capt. Lou Albano
1973: The Grand Wizard
1972: Bobby Heenan

MATCH OF THE YEAR

- 1986: Dusty Rhodes vs. Ric Flair (*Dusty wins NWA title at Great American Bash*)
 1985: Hulk Hogan & Mr. T vs. Roddy Piper & Paul Orndorff (*WrestleMania*)
 1984: Kerry Von Erich vs. Ric Flair (*Von Erich captures NWA World title*)
 1983: Harley Race vs. Ric Flair (*Race wins seventh NWA World title*)
 1982: Bob Backlund vs. Jimmy Snuka (*cage match*)
 1981: Andre the Giant vs. Killer Khan



Killer Khan vs. Andre the Giant

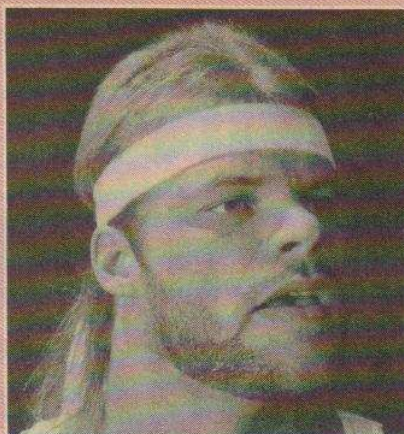
- 1980: Bruno Sammartino vs. Larry Zbyszko (*cage match*)
 1979: Dusty Rhodes vs. Harley Race (*Rhodes wins NWA World title*)
 1978: Bob Backlund vs. Superstar Graham (*Backlund wins WWF World title*)
 1977: Superstar Graham vs. Bruno Sammartino (*Graham wins WWF World title*)
 1976: Bruno Sammartino vs. Stan Hansen
 1975: Bruno Sammartino vs. Spiros Arion
 1974: Dory Funk Jr. vs. Jack Brisco
 1973: Harley Race vs. Dory Funk Jr. (*Race wins first NWA World title*)
 1972: Bruno Sammartino wins 22-man Los Angeles battle royal

FEUD OF THE YEAR

- 1986: Hulk Hogan vs. Paul Orndorff

MOST IMPROVED WRESTLER

- 1986: Terry Gordy
 1985: Steve Williams
 1984: Billy Jack Haynes
 1983: Brett Wayne Sawyer
 1982: Barry Windham
 1981: Kevin Sullivan
 1980: Tony Atlas
 1979: Tommy Rich
 1978: Dino Bravo



Lex Luger

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

- 1986: Lex Luger
 1985: The Barbarian
 1984: Mike Von Erich
 1983: Angelo Mosca Jr.
 1982: Brad Armstrong
 1981: David Sammartino
 1980: Terry Taylor
 1979: Sweet Brown Sugar
 1978: Tommy Rich
 1977: Rick Steamboat
 1976: Bob Backlund
 1975: Ric Flair
 1974: Larry Zbyszko
 1973: Cowboy Bob Orton/
 Tony Carea (tie)
 1972: Mike Graham

INSPIRATIONAL WRESTLER

- 1986: Chris Adams
 1985: Mike Von Erich
 1984: Sgt. Slaughter

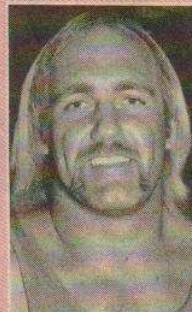


Sgt. Slaughter

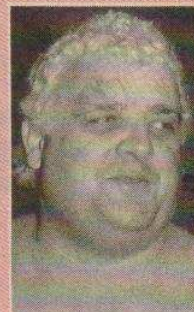
- 1983: Hulk Hogan
 1982: Roddy Piper
 1981: Bob Backlund
 1980: Junkyard Dog
 1979: Chief Jay Strongbow
 1978: Blackjack Mulligan
 1977: Bob Backlund
 1976: Bruno Sammartino
 1975: Mike McCord
 1974: Dick Murdoch
 1973: Johnny Valentine
 1972: Lord Al Hays

MOST POPULAR WRESTLER

- 1986: Roddy Piper
 1985: Hulk Hogan
 1984: Kerry Von Erich
 1983: Jimmy Snuka
 1982: Andre the Giant
 1981: Tommy Rich
 1980: Mr. Wrestling II



Hulk Hogan



Dusty Rhodes

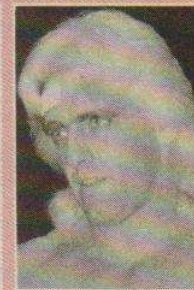
- 1979: Dusty Rhodes
 1978: Dusty Rhodes
 1977: Andre the Giant
 1976: Wahoo McDaniel
 1975: Mil Mascaras
 1974: Billy Robinson
 1973: Chief Jay Strongbow
 1972: Jack Brisco/Fred Curry (tie)

MOST HATED WRESTLER

- 1986: Paul Orndorff
 1985: Roddy Piper
 1984: Roddy Piper
 1983: Greg Valentine
 1982: Ted DiBiase
 1981: Ken Patera
 1980: Larry Zbyszko
 1979: Greg Valentine



Roddy Piper



Ric Flair

- 1978: Ric Flair
 1977: Ken Patera
 1976: Stan Hansen
 1975: Greg Valentine
 1974: The Great Mephisto
 1973: Superstar Graham
 1972: The Sheik

PWI EDITORS' AWARD

- 1986: Verne Gagne
 1985: Dan Shocket
 1984: David Von Erich
 1983: The Grand Wizard
 1982: Lou Thesz
 1981: Bruno Sammartino

The 10 Most Influential Wrestlers Of The PWI Years

The men in this section are wrestling's elite, a veritable Hall of Fame of professional wrestling. On the following pages, we chronicle the careers of a small group of remarkable athletes who, by their deeds both in and out of the squared circle, have shaped and reshaped the very foundations of their sport!

SINCE THE INCEPTION of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* in 1979, we have watched as both the sport and PWI itself grew in scope and influence. Wrestling in 1987 is quite different from the way the sport was eight years ago, and so is PWI.

As the years passed, and we chronicled the men and the changes, a feature story in the pages of PWI—or, more important, its hard-earned place on the cover—grew to mean something particularly special. The athletes that dominated the headlines on the cover and the stories in the magazine came to represent the very best the sport has to offer.

That's a lot of names over eight years.

So when the plans for this special 100th issue were being determined, and Editor-in-Chief Stu Saks suggested that we choose a list of the 10 Most Influential Wrestlers Of The PWI Years, his idea was met with decidedly mixed reaction.

Actually, it was something like announcing a Mt. Everest expedition to a troop of Boy Scouts. The spirits were willing, but how do you go about getting a staff of cranky editors to agree on a list of 10 names? Each editor has his own favorites and, when first submitted, no staff member's "10 Most Influential" list matched anyone else's.

Hours of arguing and debate fol-

lowed, and eventually the list of candidates was narrowed down; grudging acknowledgments of talent replaced less-than-objective personal preferences. It was not the first time that friendships in the office were strained by the unique demands of wrestling journalism.

Once the list was determined, the real work began. We combed through every word on every page of every issue of PWI in search of the most important and most revealing quotes that best illustrate each man's trials, tribulations, and triumphs. We searched for comments that would yield insight into the characters of these men who have risen so high in such a competitive and exacting sport.

Looking at the panorama of wrestling history on the following pages, we're confident that we've succeeded.

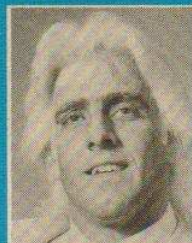
As we struggled with our research, one important fact became very clear: Professional wrestlers are extremely complex, both as individuals and as athletes.

In reviewing the quotes by and about these men who most influenced the sport during the PWI years, our love for the sport and for the sport's stars was renewed and invigorated.

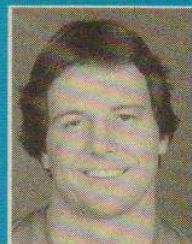
As you delve into the history on the following pages, we hope you'll feel the same way.



Bob Backlund



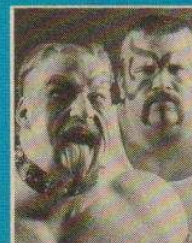
Ric Flair



Roddy Piper



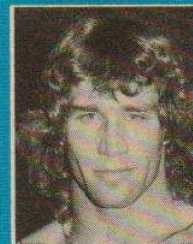
Dusty Rhodes



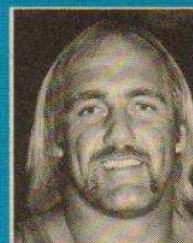
The Road Warriors



Andre the Giant



Kerry Von Erich



Hulk Hogan



Harley Race



Bruno Sammartino

Vital Stats: 6'1", 242 pounds; year turned pro: 1974
Major Titles Held: Missouri State heavyweight title (1976); WWF heavyweight title (2/20/78-12/26/83); WWF tag team title (1980, with Pedro Morales)

BACKLUND ON BACKLUND

"Sure I'm afraid every time I step into the ring. I don't think that makes me a coward. It makes me smart . . . there's a line between being afraid and being psyched up."

—*"King's Court"*; October 1983

"I figured that I wasn't going to wrestle anymore, I was working some in construction, I was gonna get a job in coaching, maybe at the college or high school level, in wrestling. I wasn't going to lower my standards or lower my morals or do things that I wasn't proud of. I want my friends out there and I want my wife and my daughter to be proud to say that they're a friend of Bob Backlund's, not to be ashamed of it."

—*"Press Conference"*; February 1985

"He's a mindless wimp who unthinkingly obeys every word of [his manager Arnold] Skaaland . . . Backlund hasn't had an original thought in his whole life. He's nothing but a farm boy with hay for brains and manure for guts."

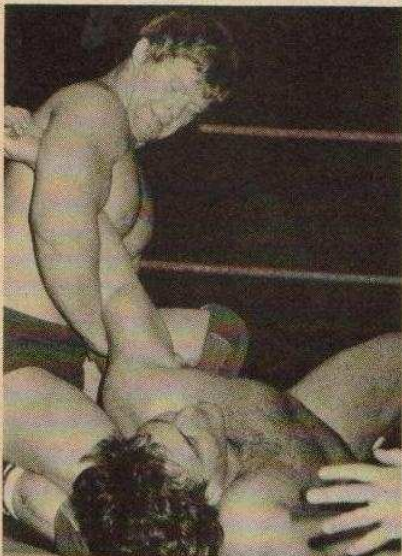
—*Fred Blassie; "Bob Backlund Put Me In The Hospital!"*; May 1981

I think it isn't too early to herald Backlund as one of the all-time great wrestling champions. Surely in the three years-plus he has held the title, he's distinguished himself with valor and courage, setting a fine example to all young and would-be athletes in sports.

—*"The Morgenstein Report"*; October 1981

"I hate him because he's had everything and I had nothing. But now I got the chance to get equal. All I got to do is take what he's got."

—*Adrian Adonis; "King's Court"*; March 1982

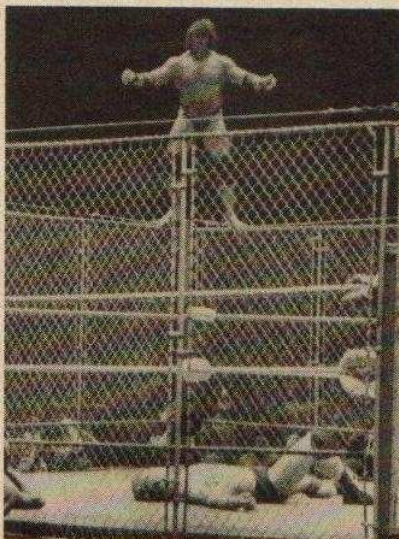


Backlund armbars Adrian Adonis

A Madison Square Garden title defense has become a very routine affair for WWF champion Bob Backlund.

—*"Dressing Room Confidential"*; August 1982

Climbing to the top rope inside the cage, Snuka unleashed his frightening flying bodypress that left Backlund stunned in the middle of the ring. Climbing to the top rope again, Snuka prepared to deliver the finishing blow, but thought twice: Instead, he scaled to the very top of the cage itself and



Jimmy Snuka prepares to "Superfly"

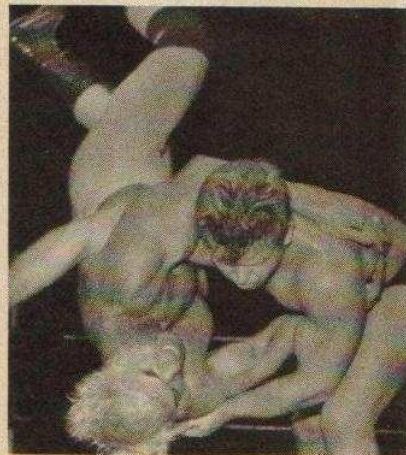
executed a breathtaking leap from nearly 25 feet in the air! Although Backlund was stunned from the first leap, he was barely conscious enough to roll out of the way as Snuka sailed through the air from the top of the cage.

"The Superfly" was completely paralyzed upon contact with the bare canvas, and the 10 minutes or so it took for him to recover allowed a very weak and slightly awake Bob Backlund to crawl through the cage door and claim

a victory.

—*"Backlund vs. Snuka: War Of Attrition In The Steel Cage"*; November 1982

"From my vantage point, I don't think Graham was robbed of anything. Backlund took the title fair and square,



Backlund flips Superstar Graham

and he's defended it that way ever since. That seems to be something that needs to be repeated so often, particularly now that Graham has returned to the WWF to exact his revenge."

—*Matt Brock; "Looking At Bob Backlund"*; February 1983

"Bobby stole my title from me, and I will do anything I have to do to get it back. Backlund is a thief, and it goes to show how stupid the fans can be to admire a cheat like Backlund the way they do."

—*Superstar Graham; "Press Conference"*; May 1983

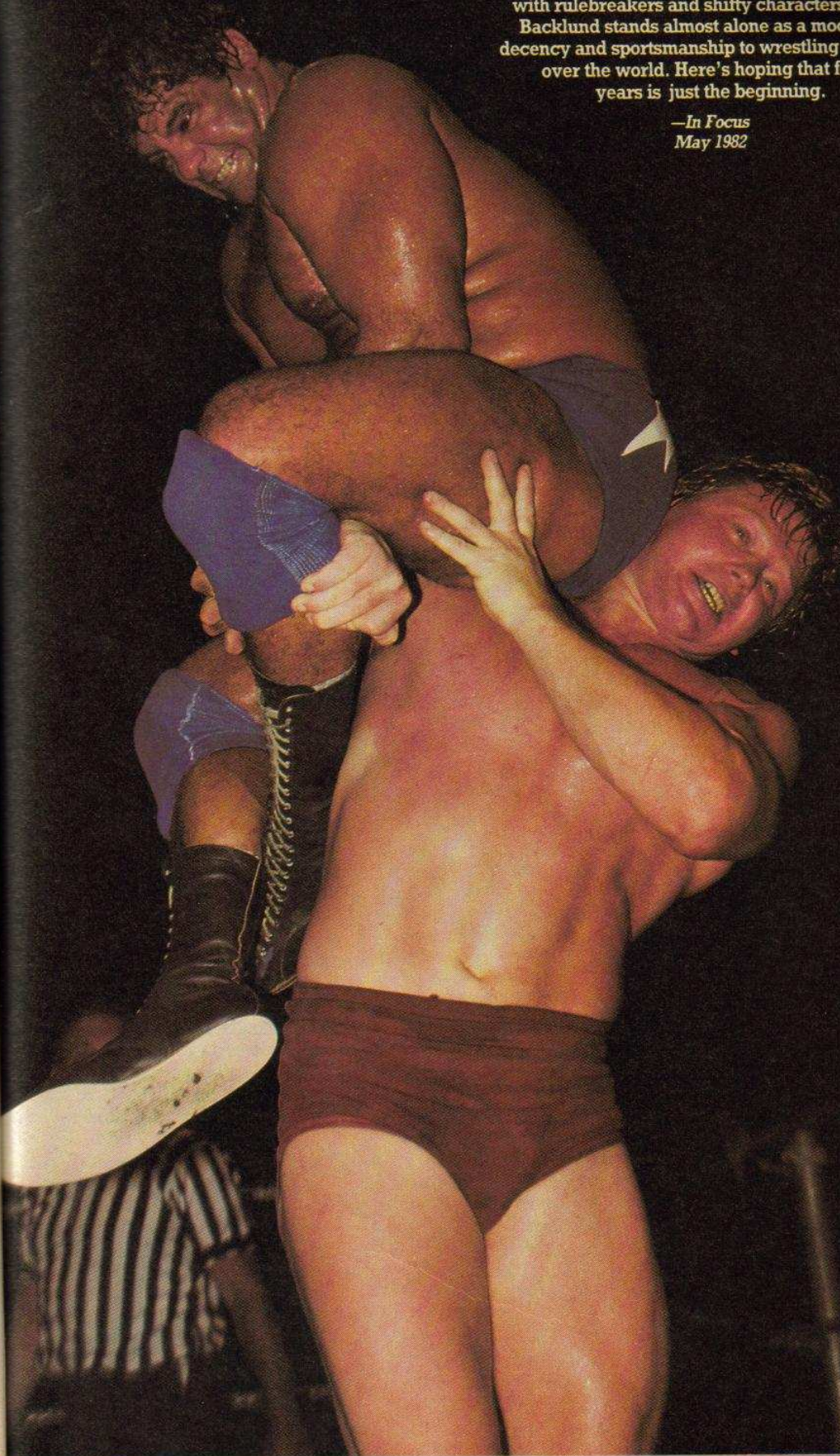
There are few men in this sport capable of beating [Hulk] Hogan. Backlund is one of those men.

—*"Dressing Room Confidential"*; December 1984

Bob Backlund has just celebrated the fourth complete year of his reign as WWF champion. It has been a tenure of dignity and character, unmatched anywhere else . . . In a sport filled with rulebreakers and shifty characters, Bob Backlund stands almost alone as a model of decency and sportsmanship to wrestling fans all over the world. Here's hoping that four years is just the beginning.

—In Focus
May 1982

BOB BACKLUND



Vital Stats: 6'1", 245 pounds; year turned pro: 1972
Major Titles Held: NWA World tag team title (1977, with Greg Valentine); U.S. title (1980, 1981); NWA World title (1981-present, four title reigns)

FLAIR ON FLAIR

"I'm really stuck about what to do . . . I really enjoy the support of the fans, I like to have them behind me all the time. They react to my style in the ring very well. But when you face a man like Rhodes, there are certain things that you have to do in the ring that you normally wouldn't do under the circumstances. What I'm afraid of is that the fans wouldn't support me if I had to make the changes I feel are necessary if I am to wrestle Rhodes in the manner I see fit."

—*"Ric Flair's Painful Choice: His Fans or Dusty's Title? He Can't Have Both!"*; January 1982

"It's been like some sort of crazy battle royal or something, except that it's 50 against one. Fifty contenders against one champion. There's nothing like it anywhere else in sport, and it's a terrible amount of pressure to put on one man. If you're a contender, you can lose a match, and there will always be tomorrow's match, or the next day. For me, I can't afford to let my concentration lapse for even a second. If I lose, that's it, out the window. It's a matter of having everything I've geared my life to being put on the line each and every match. It's a do or die situation each time I step into the ring."

—*"Press Conference"*; June 1982

"I don't make the rules, I use them."

—*"King's Court"*; October 1983

"Flair wants to keep that title more than life itself. He's not going to drop his guard for one minute against me."

—*Rick Steamboat; "Ringside"*; September 1979

"A good young dude who's been listenin' to the wrong sort of people. When I first saw Flair, I thought he'd be a champion sure as the day is short in January. But he ain't fulfilled his predictions 'cause he's too worried about how he looks and whether fans like him or not. Until you get away from listening to the morons in the arena, you're going to go nowhere fast . . . Ric ain't realized that. When he does, look out for him. He's got speed, guts, and strength . . . Underneath that smirk, he's the model for a champ. Someday."

—*"Harley Race: 'The Men Most Likely To Take My Title' "*; July 1980

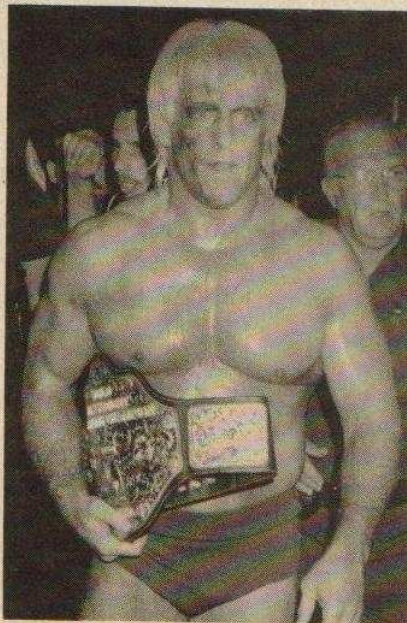
Hearty congratulations go to Ric Flair, the new NWA titleholder. It remains to be seen how this champion will conduct himself in his new and important position, but the coming of Flair as champion is a breath of fresh air to everyone who follows the NWA.

—*"In Focus"*; February 1982

"Ric Flair, Ric Flair, everyone wants to know what I think about Ric Flair. Well, let me tell you, he about as useful as a jackass in a bull riding competition."

—*Dusty Rhodes; "What They Are Saying"*; February 1982

More and more people are noticing



Flair: the man and his title

that Flair is beginning to consider the NWA title his enemy. He also considers it the most wonderful thing in the world. These two tensions are tearing him apart. Perhaps he's gotten too far too fast.

—*"Ric Flair's Startling Confession: 'I Hate Being Champion!' "*; October 1982

"Ric Flair has taken this legal maneuver and turned it into an instrument of torture."

—*"Jack Brisco's Startling Declaration: 'Ban the Figure-Four Leglock!' "*; June 1983

Nick Bockwinkel has the reputation of using his manager, Bobby Heenan, to save his title for him. Bob Backlund has the reputation of defending his title only against rulebreakers . . . Ric Flair defends against anyone and everyone worthy of a title shot. In the world of professional wrestling, that's a common claim, but a very uncommon type of practice. Ric Flair is an uncommon type of wrestler.

—*"Ric Flair vs. Rick Steamboat: Friendly Rivalry Or Bitter Feud?"*; August 1983

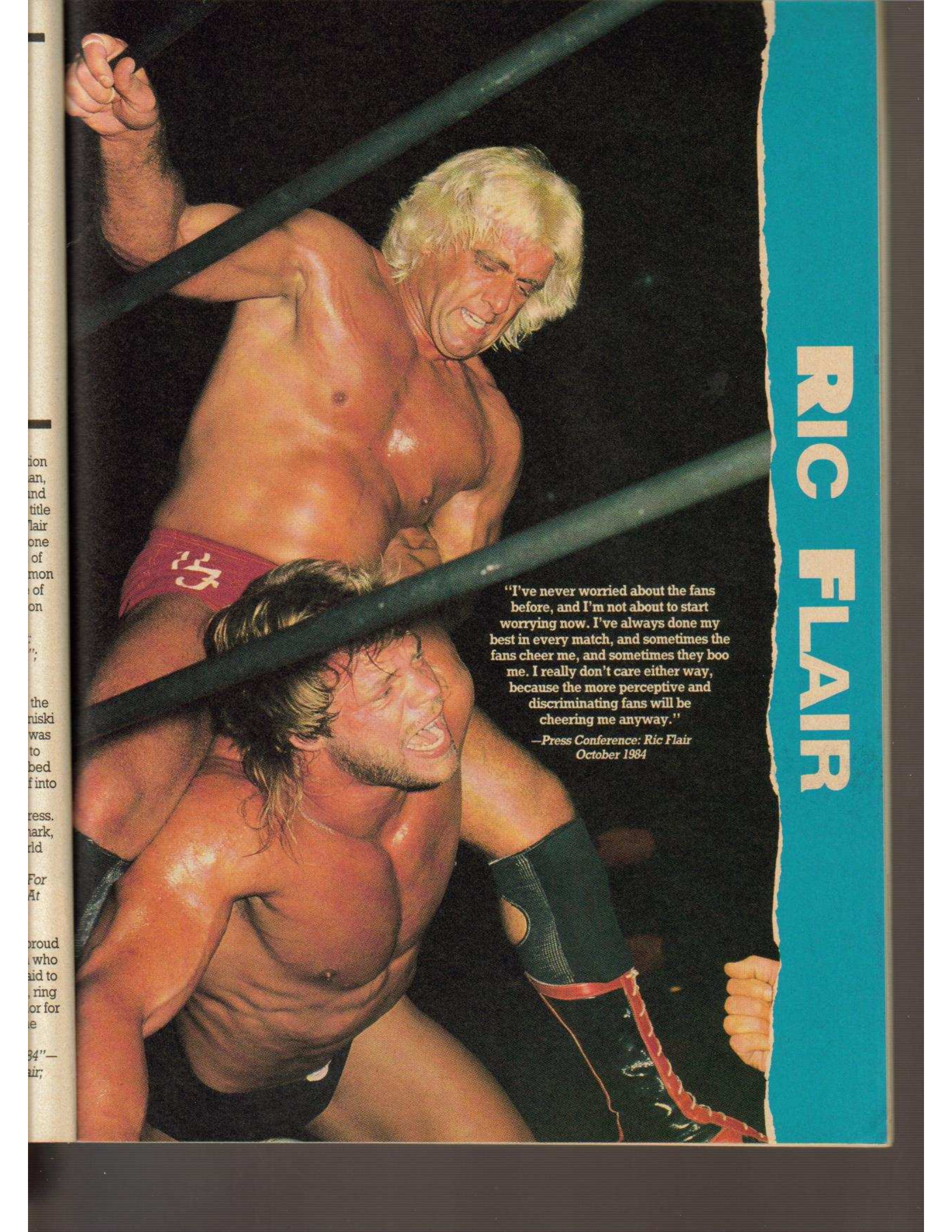
The moment of destiny came at the 33-minute mark. [Referee Gene] Kiniski had been accidentally struck and was on his knees, groggy and trying to regain his senses, when Flair climbed to the top rope. Catapulting himself into the air, he flew at Race with a beautifully executed flying bodypress. Three seconds later, at the 33:29 mark, Ric Flair was the new NWA World champion.

—*"Ric Flair Whips Harley Race For NWA Title: A Second Chance At Greatness"*; April 1984

"I see a man who is supremely proud of what he does in life. I see a man who knows what he wants and isn't afraid to go out and get it. I see a man who, ring tactics aside, is a terrific ambassador for professional wrestling. I see the Wrestler of the Year."

—*Fan comment; "Achievement '84"—Wrestler Of The Year: Ric Flair;* March 1985

RIC FLAIR

A full-page photograph of Ric Flair in a wrestling ring. He is shirtless, wearing his signature red trunks with a white dollar sign, and has his signature long blonde hair. He is in a dominant position, leaning over another wrestler who is on the ground. The background is dark, and the ring ropes are visible. The image is framed by a torn-edge effect on the right side.

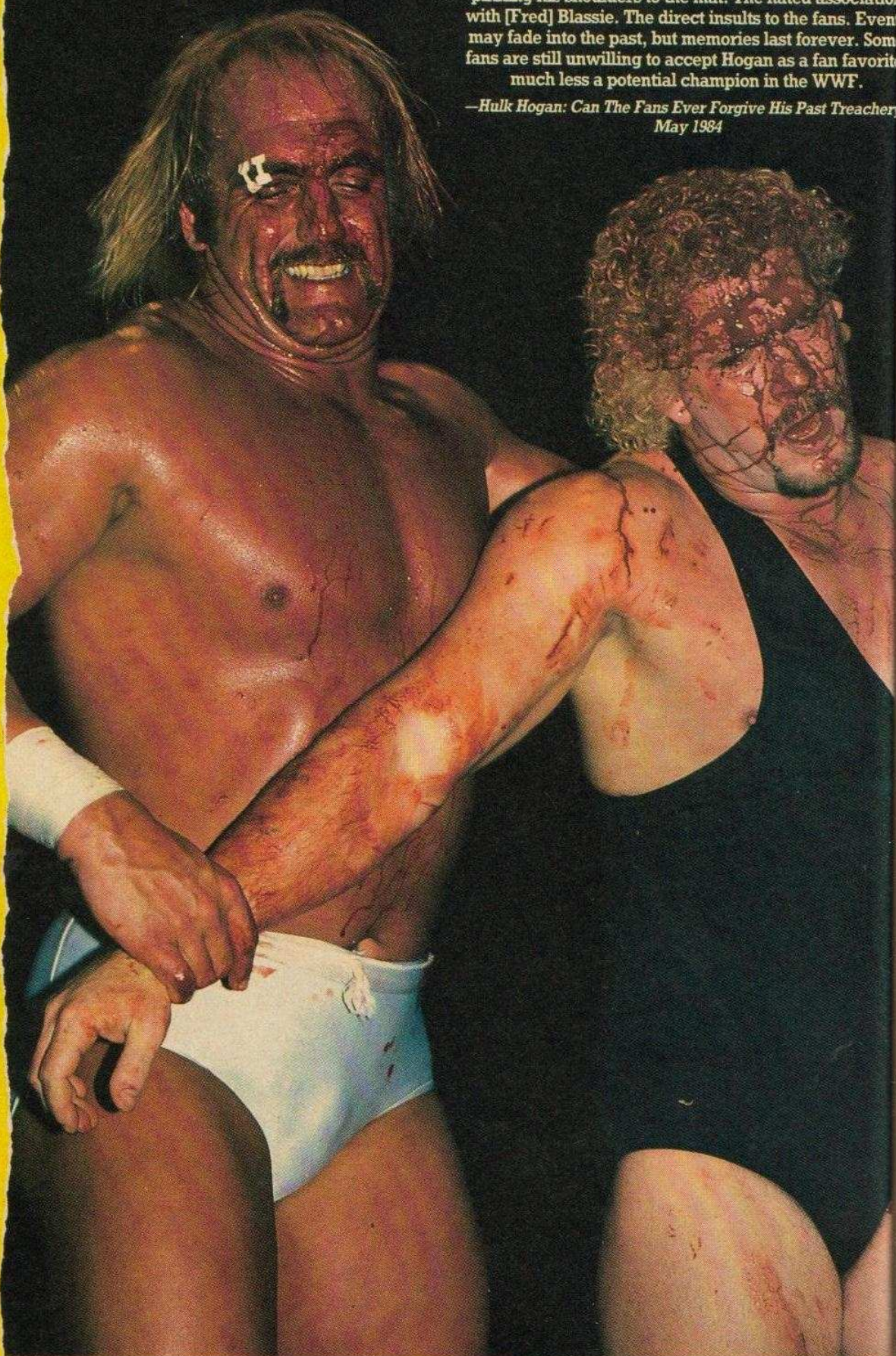
"I've never worried about the fans before, and I'm not about to start worrying now. I've always done my best in every match, and sometimes the fans cheer me, and sometimes they boo me. I really don't care either way, because the more perceptive and discriminating fans will be cheering me anyway."

—Press Conference: Ric Flair
October 1984

HULK HOGAN

For many fans, the wounds are still fresh. The brutal matches with fan favorites. The callous way in which he wrestled, striving to seriously injure an opponent before pinning his shoulders to the mat. The hated association with [Fred] Blassie. The direct insults to the fans. Events may fade into the past, but memories last forever. Some fans are still unwilling to accept Hogan as a fan favorite much less a potential champion in the WWF.

—Hulk Hogan: Can The Fans Ever Forgive His Past Treachery
May 1984



Vital Stats: 6'8", 302 pounds; year turned pro: 1978
Major Titles Held: WWF World title (January 23, 1984-present)

HOGAN ON HOGAN

"There's no decision to be made. I'll admit most men can't do what I'm doing, but I'm not like most men. I've always dreamed of winning the AWA belt and now that the dream is within my grasp, I want it more than ever. But my phone never stops ringing."

—"Hulk Hogan At The Crossroads: Wrestling Or Hollywood?"; December 1982

"Hulkamania is here to stay."
—"Press Conference"; June 1984

"Blassie isn't my shadow! I do things on my own. The only person who looks after me is me. I'm tired of paying a man to stab me in the back. Blassie has a contract to manage me in the WWF. That's all he has."

—"Hulk Hogan And Fred Blassie: Has Their Partnership Dissolved?"; July 1981

One of the most hated men in wrestling, Hulk Hogan, has been winning cheers when he appears in AWA matches. "The fans here are smarter than anywhere else in the world," contends Hogan. "They know I'm the best and react accordingly. It's about time I was recognized by fans as great." The fans also realize that Hogan has been wrestling rulebreakers due to a scheduling situation. Hogan doesn't care who he wrestles, as long as he gets someone to injure.

—"Wrestling Enquirer"; January 1982

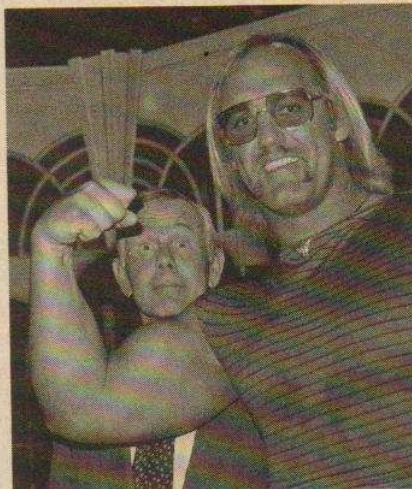
The incredible Hulk Hogan has certainly lived up to his name. Hulk is now \$10,000 richer after bodyslamming 400-pound-plus Crusher Blackwell during a special challenge match. "This goes to prove I am the strongest man in wrestling!" Hogan boasted after the mind-boggling feat. "Other so-called strongmen have tried and failed."

—"Ringside"; March 1982

"How many shots does this guy expect before he's laughed out of the territory? He ought to go back to Hollywood to be a second-rate actor instead of a third-rate wrestler, which he is now."

—Bobby Heenan, "Wrestling Enquirer"; July 1982

"Truth, justice, and the Hulk Hogan way!" That's how Hulk Hogan described Hulkmania to Johnny Carson and a national television audience when he appeared on *The Tonight Show*. According to Hogan, Hulkmania



Hogan shows off for Johnny Carson

is sweeping the country... film fans are lining up six blocks deep and more to see *Rocky III*, the film in which Hogan has a major role.

—"Hulkmania"; November 1982

Should he continue his career in wrestling, one that promises athletic immortality, or should he leave wrestling and go to Hollywood? He can't do both.

—"Hulk Hogan At The Crossroads: Wrestling Or Hollywood?"; December 1982

Hogan's title victory over the [Iron] Sheik can't be faulted for not being decisive. Hogan annihilated the guy... So all hail Hulk Hogan. He's strong, he's patriotic, he's an example for all of us to follow.

—Matt Brock; "Looking At Hulk Hogan"; July 1984

"It seems like the guy that comes in and is in the WWF for two weeks doesn't deserve a shot as much as a guy who's proved himself for the last, say, five years or three years or even 10 years... But I can't put him down, he's successful in what he does."

—Bob Backlund; "Press Conference"; February 1985

I have this further criticism of Hulk Hogan. I don't think he's a very good wrestler. Sure he's successful, but as far as wrestling ability, I would have to say that he is mediocre at best. Next time you see him wrestle, watch him closely. Notice how few wrestling holds he employs... I believe that in a wrestling match with strictly enforced rules, Hulk Hogan might be defeated by a talented collegiate wrestler. Perhaps this is why the WWF makes sure that Hogan never wrestles a scientific wrestler.

—"King's Court"; July 1985

Hogan is probably the biggest sporting hero in the country, bigger than Dwight Gooden, Refrigerator Perry, and Larry Bird. His face is everywhere. Hulkamania will end when Hogan wants it to and not a second before.

—Fan Comment; "Between Falls"; August 1986

While Hulk Hogan's ego remains as large as his biceps, his hammerlock on the WWF is due more to his consistency than anything else. While better wrestlers have challenged for Hogan's title, the champion has relied on a straightforward approach in keeping it. Hogan has simply outlasted his opponents, proving himself one of history's most durable champions.

—"Hulk Hogan vs. Paul Orndorff: Wrestling's Hottest Feud"; February 1987

The beginning of the end for Andre came when he tossed Hogan into the ropes but missed with a foot. Hogan clotheslined Andre, and then, in perhaps the most memorable moment of WrestleMania III, executed the bodyslam. One legdrop later, it was all over.

—"Giant Killer! Hogan Topples Andre At WrestleMania III"; August 1987

Vital Stats: 6'1", 255 pounds; year turned pro: 1960
Major Titles Held: NWA World title (1973-1983, a record seven times); Missouri heavyweight title (1972-1985, a record seven times); AWA World tag team title (1965-1967, three times with Larry Hennig, once with Chris Markoff).

RACE ON RACE

"There have always been fans that support me wherever I go," said Race, "and just now they're beginning to outnumber the slime in the mail I've been getting. I think the idiots are beginning to run out of ideas. Either that, or they're all being sent back to their padded cells."

—*"The Post-Title Horrors Of Harley Race"; December 1981*

"I've proved I'm the best ever. Not only the best NWA champion ever, but the best wrestler ever, bar none. I've set a record that no man will ever be able to surpass."

—*"Press Conference"; November 1983*

The sands of time race against the NWA champion. For some time, Race's title defenses teeter on the gray side of ragged, lackadaisical, uninspired. I think it's about over for this talented veteran. Like any champion, Race can maintain his excellence for only so many bouts. Every wrestler has just so many title defenses in him before the wearying grind erodes that extra level of brilliance needed to stay on top. I don't know when. A mystic I'm not. But it will happen before the end of the year.

—*"The Morgenstein Report"; November 1980*

"I have to say last year's match against NWA champion Harley Race was the greatest. We went at it tooth and nail, never pausing, never coming up for air. All we wanted was each other's head on a spike. A guy like Race always gives a great match, but that one was surely my greatest."

—*Mr. Wrestling II; "Close-Up"; May 1981*

Unfortunately for Race, the time



Race whips David Von Erich

when he will be wrestling for the title is getting to be further and further away. A family triumvirate stands in his way, and the way things look now, it will be some time before Race is able to overcome their challenge. Kerry, Kevin, and David Von Erich, Harley Race's three hurdles that seem to get higher and higher with each match.

—*"The Von Erichs: Harley Race's Roadblock To The NWA Title"; January 1982*

Is it possible to hold the record for most NWA title defenses and still be underrated? It seems so, and this fact gnaws at Harley Race's insides like a constant case of the flu.

—*"King's Court"; December 1983*

Race is a tired man, exhausted by his own success. The first athlete to ever win the NWA title seven times, he is a victim of his victories. He is champion.

It gets harder all the time.

—*"Harley Race: I'd Forgotten How Lonely It Is To Be Champion"; February 1984*

Fame, success, and immortality seldom come to a man by accident.

They require talent, skill, and perseverance. Harley Race has all those qualities, and we congratulate him once again on a spectacularly successful year.

—*"Achievement '83"—Wrestler of the Year: Harley Race; March 1984*

At the six-minute mark of the third fall, Flair set Race up for a backdrop, and within seconds both men's shoulders were pinned to the mat. With a surge of adrenaline, Race managed to lift one shoulder from the canvas at the referee's two-count; Flair's shoulders remained pinned, and one second later, Harley Race entered professional wrestling history as the only man ever



Race stares down Ric Flair

to wear the NWA title belt seven times. Race had previously shared the record with Lou Thesz.

—*"Achievement '85"; Match of the Year: Harley Race vs. Ric Flair; March 1984*

Harley Race is probably the *smartest* wrestler in the sport's history, and probably the most *defensive* as well. Any man who relies upon brains and cunning to win matches isn't going to excite people as much as the cute kids and the brawny offensive powerhouses. But he's going to win, and I can vouch for the fact that I never saw Harley Race beat *himself* in a match.

—*Matt Brock; "Looking At Harley Race"; February 1986*

A Memphis court judge ordered the WWF to stop representing Harley Race as "The King of Wrestling" in Tennessee after Jerry Lawler filed a lawsuit claiming exclusive rights to the tradename . . . Lawler, one of the most popular stars in the Mid-Southern area, has used the moniker since 1973.

—*Wrestling Enquirer; October 1987*

"When you're champion, everyone is your enemy. You are a symbol of their ambition. You're also proof of their failure. I always felt like a bum when I saw the NWA king when I was only a challenger. His belt was the victory I couldn't get. No matter how many times I won the belt myself, I never felt like anything but a failure when I didn't have it."

—Harley Race: "I'd Forgotten How Lonely It Is To Be Champion"
February 1984

HARLEY RACE



Vital Stats: 6'1", 302 pounds; year turned pro: 1969
Major Titles Held: NWA World tag team title (October 1984-March 1985, with Manny Fernandez); NWA World title (August 1979, June-September 1981, July-August 1986)

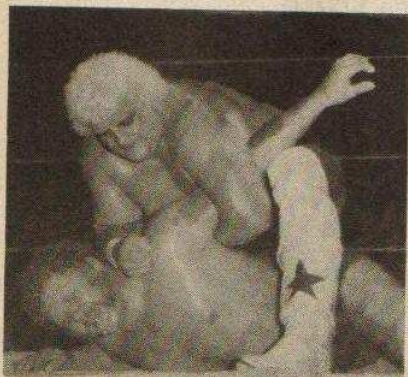
DUSTY ON DUSTY

"I don't like to brag, but I think I'm the best in the business when it comes to gettin' inside a man's defenses. You gotta be fearless, be able to take that first series of blows and keep on comin'. All great wrestlers got that sixth sense about infighting."

—*"Dusty Rhodes Wrestles Bob Backlund . . . For The WWF Title!"; December 1980*

"So I found myself getting lost in the ideal I created. There were times when I ached to be low and dirty, when opponents deserved that kind of treatment. But 'The American Dream' couldn't do something like that, so I took my lumps and controlled my fury."

—*"Has Dusty Rhodes Turned His Back On The American Dream?"; December 1983*



Dusty armbars Harley Race

Titles and championships gather unwarranted importance in professional sports. Sometimes the mere possession of a diamond-studded belt obscures sinister motives or actually condones venomous rulebreaking tactics. On the other hand, a wrestler who fails to win a title or doesn't manage a lengthy reign suffers a stigma obscuring excellent skills and decent character traits. Dusty Rhodes, "The American Dream," has labored under such burdens long enough. What real difference does it make how long Rhodes holds a title or whether he ever wins another major championship? Can the word "champion" compare with Rhodes' qualities of fairness, kindness, and concern for the well-being of both fans and fellow grapplers? Absolutely not. Focus upon Rhodes' brilliant style, clever wit, and loyalty to his peers rather than any black-and-white judgment of his relative title successes. If not, a great wrestler is done a great disservice.

—*"The Morgenstein Report"; December 1980*

The doctor walked in. He cleaned the wound and examined the cut. "Another Rhodes special," he

declared, "maybe 15 stitches."

—*"The Violent World Of Dusty Rhodes"; July 1981*

"I don't think Rhodes is all that good. He's kind of slow and stupid, both intellectually and physically. But because he has spent his entire career mouthing off and building himself up, tooting his own horn so to speak, he has received attention totally at variance with his actual achievements."

—*"U.S. Champion Roddy Piper: 'Dusty Rhodes Has Made Me Great'"; October 1981*

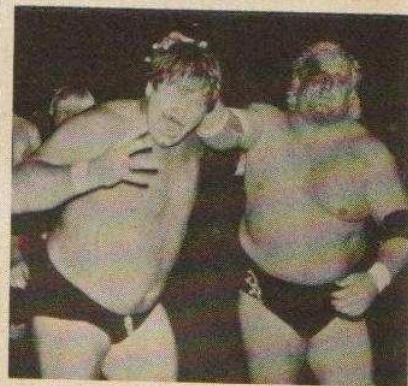
"The Dream is dead, and The Midnight Rider rises phoenixlike from his ashes, but I know for truth that these two are one. The American Dream is dead, but Dusty Rhodes lives in the guise of The Midnight Rider. I will eliminate the Rider in the same way I eliminated Rhodes."

—*Kevin Sullivan; "The Mystery Behind The Midnight Rider: How Dusty Rhodes Disgraced Wrestling"; June 1983*

"Since he has become involved in this devil-worship, he hasn't been training, his physique has deteriorated, and his attitude has changed drastically. I'm telling you, daddy, it's a dangerous bull that Sullivan is riding, and someone has to try to make him understand where he is and what he's doing to himself. Someone's got to beat some sense into that boy, and I'm going to try to do it."

—*Dusty Rhodes; "Dusty Rhodes vs. Kevin Sullivan: Can The Dream Destroy The Prince Of Darkness . . . Without Destroying Kevin Sullivan?"; August 1983*

"Dusty Rhodes has more heart than any other man in professional wrestling. He'll keep on going until



Dusty pulls Stan Hansen's hair

he's laid out on the floor swimming in his own sweat and blood."

—*Stan Hansen; "Close-Up"; October 1984*

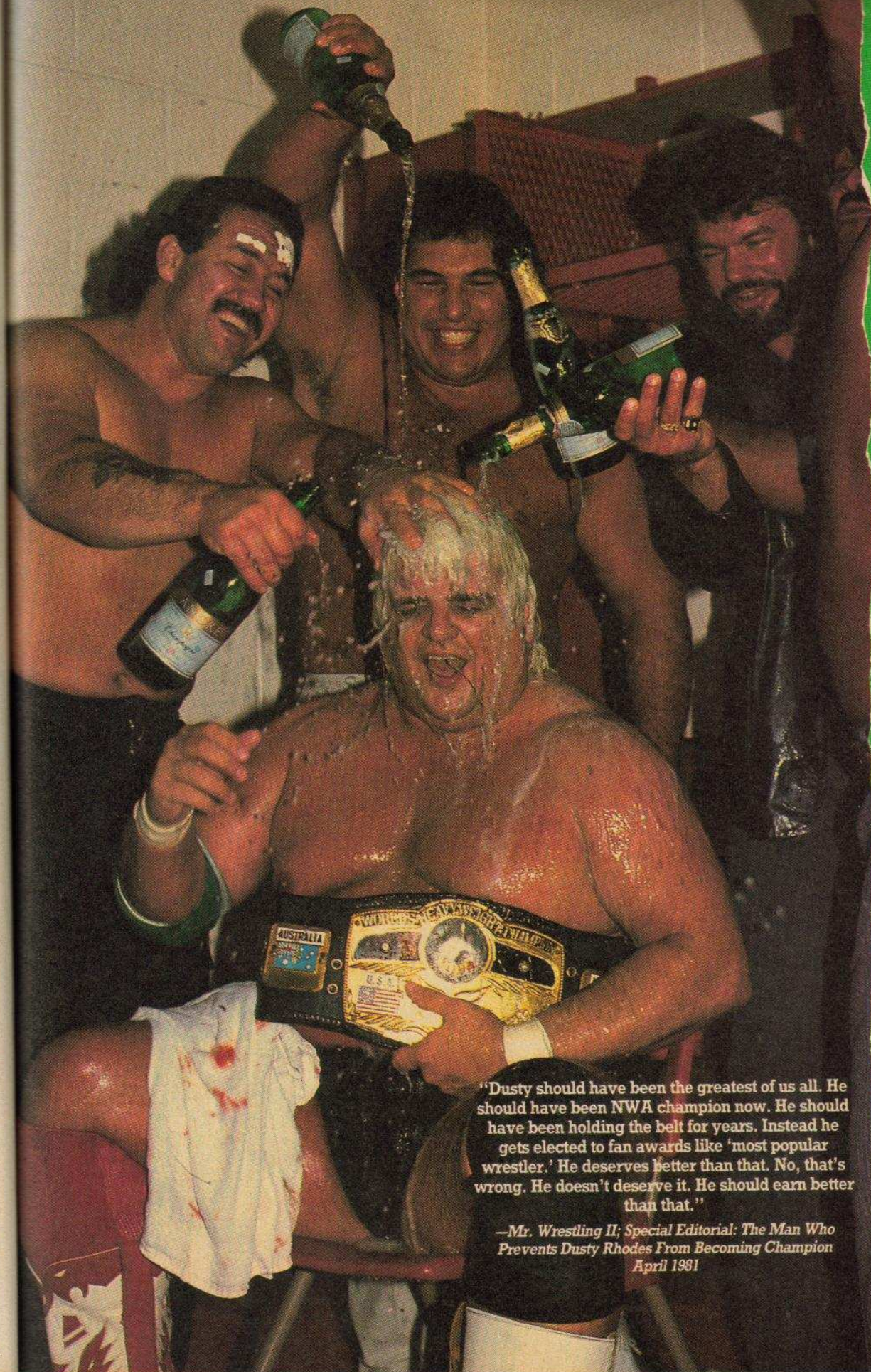
Rhodes was being pummeled again, and with each connection of Flair's fist to the flesh above Rhodes' right eye, the tear in that flesh became wider, the flow of blood down the face became greater, and the strength in Dusty's body diminished. Then the bombshell fell: [Joe] Frazier stopped the match! Ric Flair retained his NWA World title and was awarded \$1 million.

—*"Million-Dollar Controversy: Did Ric Flair Really Beat Dusty Rhodes At Starrcade '84?"; April 1985*

Confident that Rhodes' victory was a fluke, Flair went ahead with his scheduled victory party that lasted well into the night. In the meantime, The Dream was dreaming in his bed, fully aware of the fact that he was to make his first title defense—against Flair—the next night at a non-Bash card in Dallas. Dusty won that match cleanly and five days later defeated Flair again in a steel cage at the final Bash in Atlanta.

—*"The Great American Bash: Wrestling's Month-Long Fourth Of July Celebration"; December 1986*

DUSTY RHODES



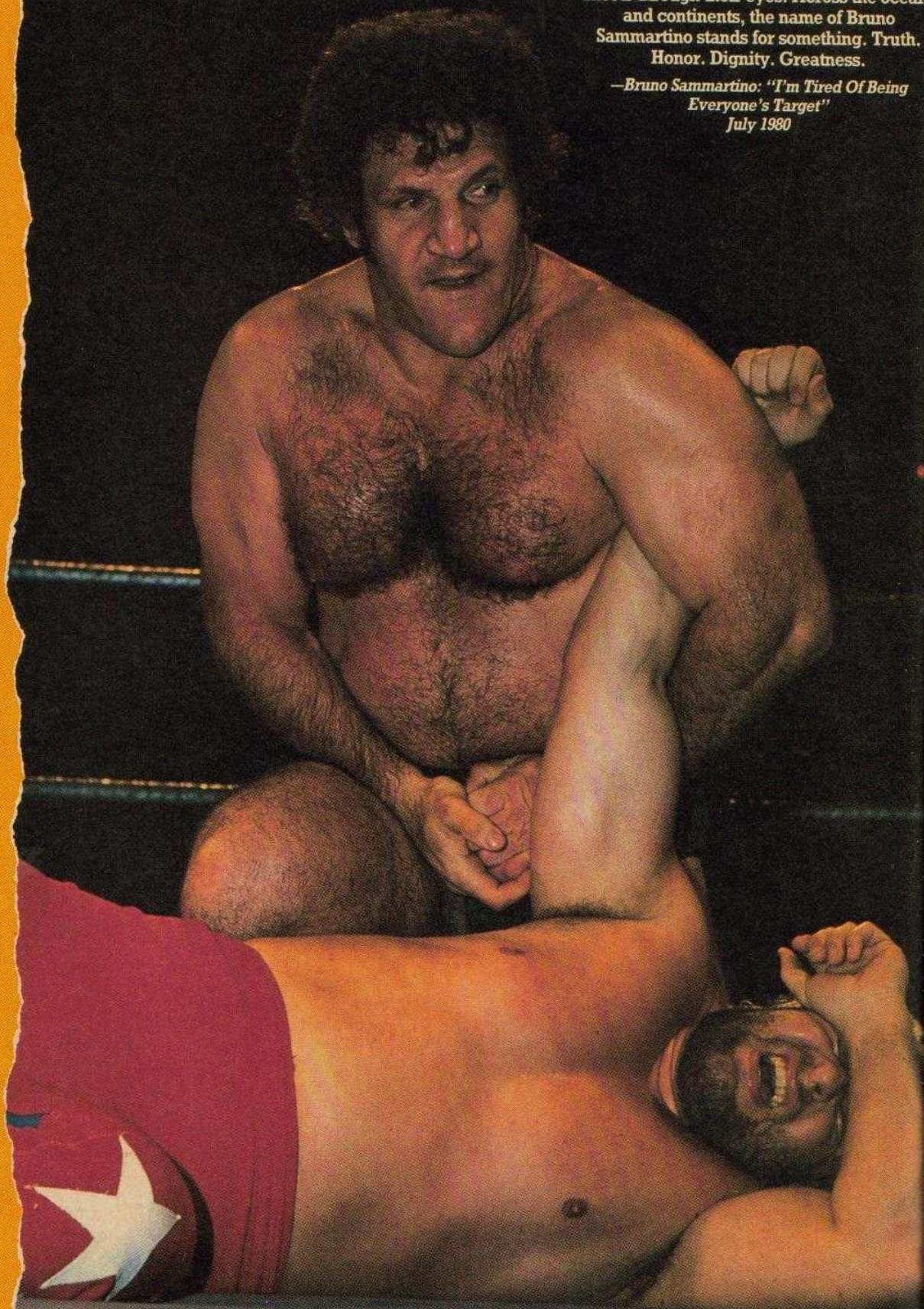
"Dusty should have been the greatest of us all. He should have been NWA champion now. He should have been holding the belt for years. Instead he gets elected to fan awards like 'most popular wrestler.' He deserves better than that. No, that's wrong. He doesn't deserve it. He should earn better than that."

—Mr. Wrestling II; Special Editorial: The Man Who Prevents Dusty Rhodes From Becoming Champion
April 1981

BRUNO SAMMARTINO

His reputation transcends wrestling. Mention Sammartino's name to someone unfamiliar with wrestling and a glint of understanding shoots through their eyes. Across the oceans and continents, the name of Bruno Sammartino stands for something. Truth. Honor. Dignity. Greatness.

—Bruno Sammartino: "I'm Tired Of Being Everyone's Target"
July 1980



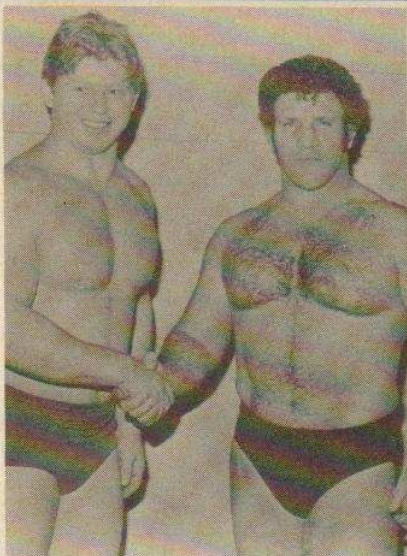
Vital Stats: 5'11", 252 pounds; year turned pro: 1959
Major Titles Held: WWF heavyweight championship (May 17, 1963-January 18, 1971;
December 10, 1973-April 30, 1977)

BRUNO ON BRUNO

"There is more to being champion than wearing the belt or beating contenders. You must act a certain way."
—"Press Conference"; September 1979

"I've been in this sport for 22 years. I'm in a good position right now, I'm healthy, I'm strong. I don't want to be in the ring 10 years from now and hear the people at ringside talking to each other, saying stuff like, 'Hey, look at that bum. That's Bruno Sammartino. He used to be great once.' That's a terrible thing to have happen to anybody, and doggone it, it's not gonna happen to me. I'm getting out while I'm ahead of the game, while I'm still on top."

—"Press Conference"; February 1982



Bruno with Bob Backlund

"I spend all my time looking over my shoulder at the punks trying to make a reputation on me. If they want Backlund, let them go after Backlund. If they want me, let them be honest enough to say so and I'll gladly wrestle them."

—*What Made Bruno Sammartino Say ... 'I'm Tired Of Being Everybody's Target!'* "; July 1980

"I tried to kill Zbyszko!" shouted Sammartino, still trembling from the match. "Doggone, I wanted to pull his head off and throw it onto Seventh Avenue!"

—"Bruno Goes Berserk: 'I Tried To Kill Zbyszko!'" "; August 1980

"You know, when I first started, I loved using the bearhug. Nothing gave me greater pleasure than to use my strength to beat another man. But nowadays these young punks get out of the hold by eye-gouging. So I have been using more and more armlocks as

time goes by to protect my eyes."

—"Close-Up"; January 1981

If you ever have any doubts about who the greatest was, just remember the combined voices of millions of fans:

"Bruno! Bruno! Bruno!"

—*King's Court*; October 1981

After a stunning career of 22 years, former two-time WWF champion Bruno Sammartino has announced his retirement from wrestling. Standing at a makeshift podium in a downtown Pittsburgh hotel, a tearful Sammartino addressed the press for the last time as a wrestler.

—"Wrestling Enquirer"; January 1982

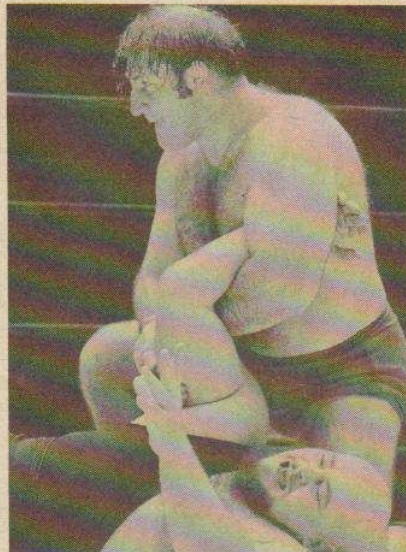
"Bruno Sammartino will always be not only the wrestler, but the man I hate the most in the world. His family and his entire ancestry should be swallowed up by Mount Vesuvius. He is a slimy individual."

—Larry Zbyszko; "Close-Up"; August 1983

While all of these men have written a chapter in wrestling's history book, no one man was able to reach the massive cross section of the American public necessary to bring professional wrestling into its own as a spectator sport. Until Bruno. When Bruno defeated Buddy Rogers in New York's Madison Square Garden in 48 seconds on May 17, 1963, he ushered in a golden age of professional wrestling. In the years that Bruno was champion, he brought a level of dignity and respect to the WWF title, and to the sport itself, which hasn't been matched since.

—"Special Fan Ballot: Bruno Sammartino—Was He The Greatest WWF Champion Ever?"; September 1983

"Bruno is the only two-time WWF champion. His first stretch as champion



Bruno armlocks Ivan Koloff

lasted a record seven years, seven months, and one day. Add to this his second title reign of over 3½ years, and you will see that Bruno held the title longer than all the other WWF champions put together! The question you should have asked is, 'Was Bruno the greatest wrestler of all time?' It is quite clear he was the top man in the sport over the last 20 years. You would have to go back to the 1940s for a young Lou Thesz or back to Ed 'Strangler' Lewis in the '20s to find someone who could even come close to the greatness of Bruno Sammartino."

—*Fan comment; "The Fans Make It Official: Bruno Sammartino Named Greatest WWF Champion Ever!"*; November 1983

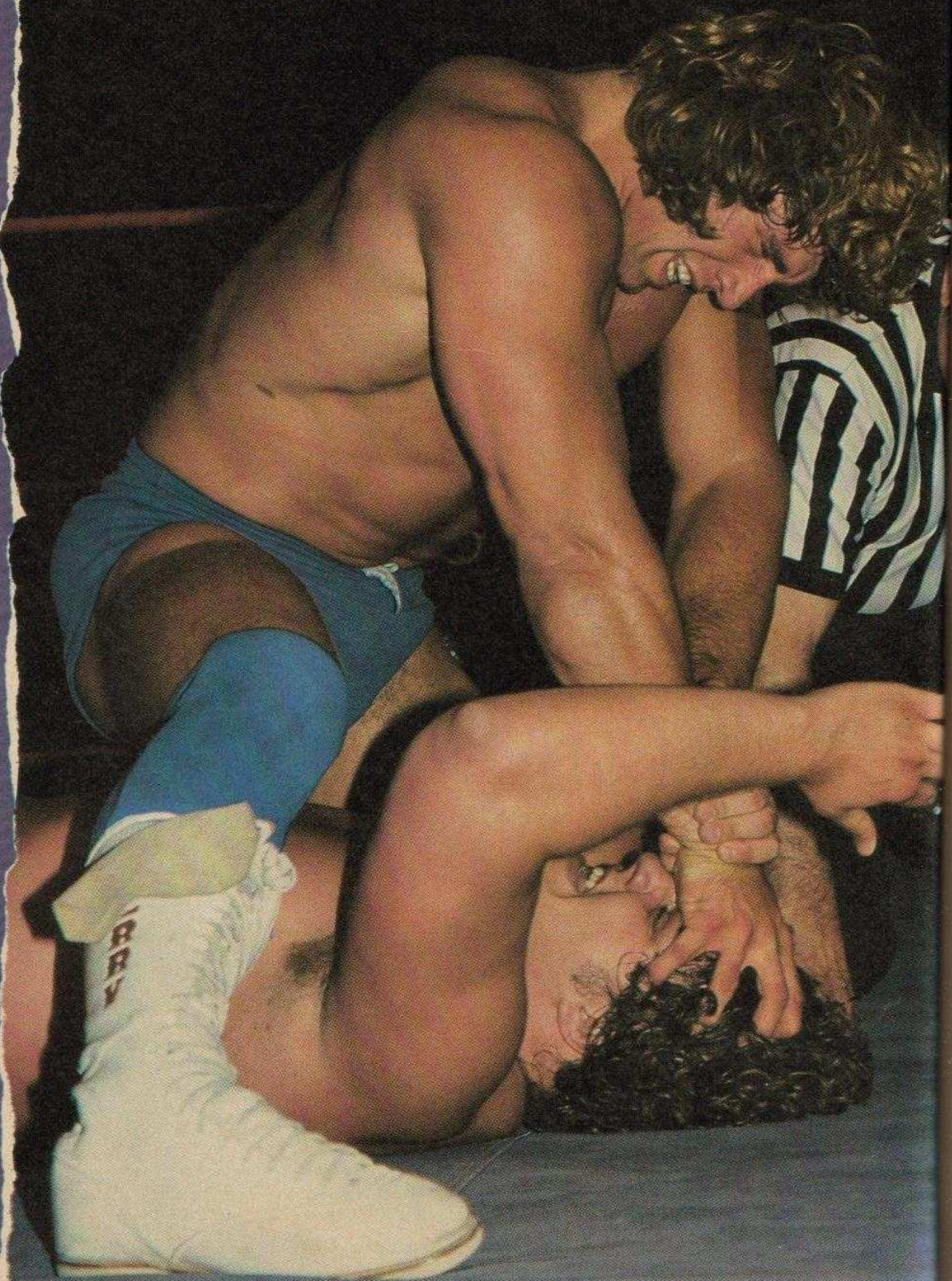
In his wildest dreams, Hogan will never be half the wrestler Sammartino was.

—"Halfway To Immortality: Hulk Hogan Targets Bruno's Record WWF Title Reign"; November 1987

KERRY VON ERICH

Papa Fritz Von Erich has taught his sons well, perhaps too well. How easy it would have been for Fritz to be the strict disciplinarian. He could have trained his sons to think as he thinks, to act as he acts. It was more important to Fritz, however, that his sons be taught to think as individuals.

—Dressing Room Confidential
May 1982



Vital Stats: 6'2", 245 pounds; year turned pro: 1978
Major Titles Held: Missouri State heavyweight championship (1983); NWA World title (May 6, 1984-May 24, 1984)

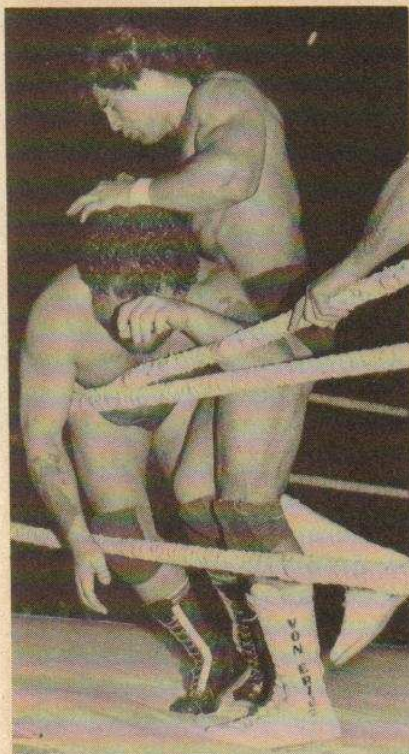
KERRY ON KERRY

"I still seem to get my share of cards and letters. I never considered myself a symbol of any sort. I just go out and do my job."

—*"Press Conference"; May 1986*

"I have no doubts that I'll regain my old abilities. In fact, I'll be better than ever. There is no room here for negative thinking. Sometimes the cards don't fall your way, but you certainly can't let that get you down. You just have to go out and try harder."

—*"Press Conference"; December 1986*



Kerry tangles up Harley Race

"Harley Race and the Missouri title is just the beginning. Anyone who knows anything about professional wrestling understands that the Missouri title is simply a steppingstone to the big one, the NWA title . . . When Ric Flair signs that contract to wrestle me, he signs away his title."

—*"What They Are Saying"; June 1983*

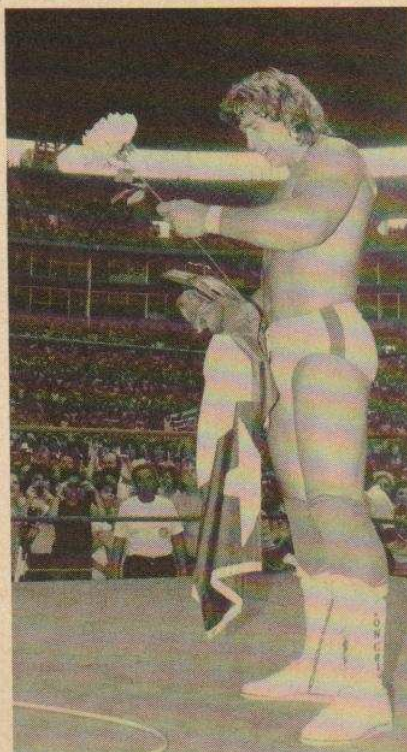
"Kerry doesn't think; he doesn't have the capacity for intelligent thought. I think that impressive musculature must have invaded his brain cavity."

—*"Cowboy Bob Orton: 'Kerry Von Erch Isn't Tough Enough To Survive The '80s'"; August 1983*

"This title means a lot to me, because it doesn't belong just to me. It belongs to my family, my friends, the 43,000

people who were in Texas Stadium that afternoon, and most of all, it belongs to my brother David . . . Those were the three most hectic, aggravating, painful, joyous, incredible weeks of my life . . . Now I fully understand what being the NWA champion means, and what kind of a schedule has to be maintained. I think that, God willing, if I am able to win the World title once again, I know what to expect and can keep the title for much longer . . . Flair's schedule is incredible, and I respect the man tremendously. I always have, but that respect is even more now that I've had a taste of what being the World champion is all about."

—*"Exclusive Coverage Of A Remarkable NWA Title Reign: Kerry Von Erch's Three Weeks On Top Of The World"; October 1984*



The yellow rose of Texas

"There is one major aspect of his personality that Kerry will have to develop if he is to be World champion again: the hunger."

—*Peter King*

"I think the major thing Kerry has got to do if he is to regain the World title is get out of Texas and face more top-rated NWA opponents throughout the country and around the world."

—*Bill Apter*

"Kerry's got to expand his repertoire of finishing maneuvers. He relies far too much on the clawhold and the abdominal stretch."

—*Craig Peters*

"Kerry Von Erch's loss of the World title to Ric Flair was inevitable. I have never seen a wrestler who religiously sticks to the rulebook who has ever been able to maintain a hold on any major title."

—*Dan Shocket*

—*"Special Analysis: What Kerry Von Erch Must Do To Regain the NWA Title"; November 1984*

They stand in line, waiting for the arena to open its doors. They have reserved tickets, but that doesn't matter. They range in age from seven to 70. There are teenage girls accompanied by one of their mothers, all Von Erch fan club members, wearing "I Love The Von Erchs" T-shirts, hoping that Kerry will look toward them and smile.

—*"On Assignment"; March 1985*

Eight months after nearly losing his life in a motorcycle accident, Kerry Von Erch bucked incredible odds and returned to the wrestling ring. The popular Texas star made his triumphant return on February 2, 1987, by pinning Brian Adias in front of a wildly cheering crowd at the Tarrant County Arena in Fort Worth, Texas.

—*"Ringside"; June 1987*

THE 10 GREATEST EVENTS OF THE PWI YEARS

Title changes, supercards, important developments affecting the very foundations of the sport—these are the 10 greatest events of the *PWI* years!

HOW DOES ONE begin? How can it be done? How can anyone possibly attempt to examine the hundreds of events of the past eight years and choose a meager 10 examples to represent the sport's development and greatness since 1979?

It's not easy.

The very same editorial meeting that resulted in our list of the 10 Most Influential Wrestlers of the *PWI* years in this issue also brought forth the list of events on the pages that follow. These are among the most spectacular incidents in all of wrestling history—indeed, they are wrestling history, tracing a remarkable path of sports excellence from 1979 through 1987.

As you might imagine, choosing 10 events sparked all sorts of debates among the editors:

"You really think *that* title change was worthy of consideration? You've got to be kidding! It was a mismatch to begin with, the referee might just as well have been blind, and there was interference besides!"

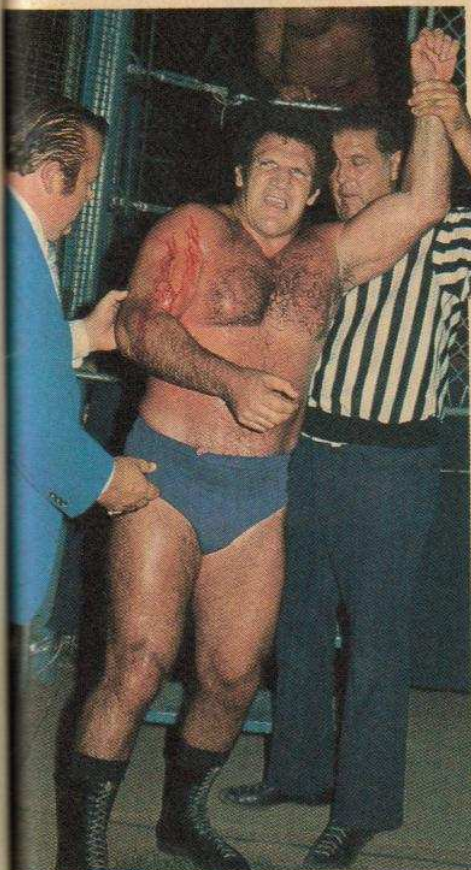
"Oh, come on, do you honestly want me to believe that we should make *that* one of the 10 greatest events of the *PWI* years? That wasn't an event, that was a travesty!"

"You know as much about wrestling as Mr. T knows about acting!"

These editorial meetings can get ugly!

That's why, in addition to the 10 events presented in this section, we've chosen five "honorable mention" events (you knew we couldn't restrict ourselves to just 10!). Taken together, the 15 items that follow are like historical benchmarks, each in its own way noting an important turning point in the development of professional wrestling.

Look back and enjoy—this is wrestling history at its very finest.



July 4, 1982 WWF Title vs. NWA Title

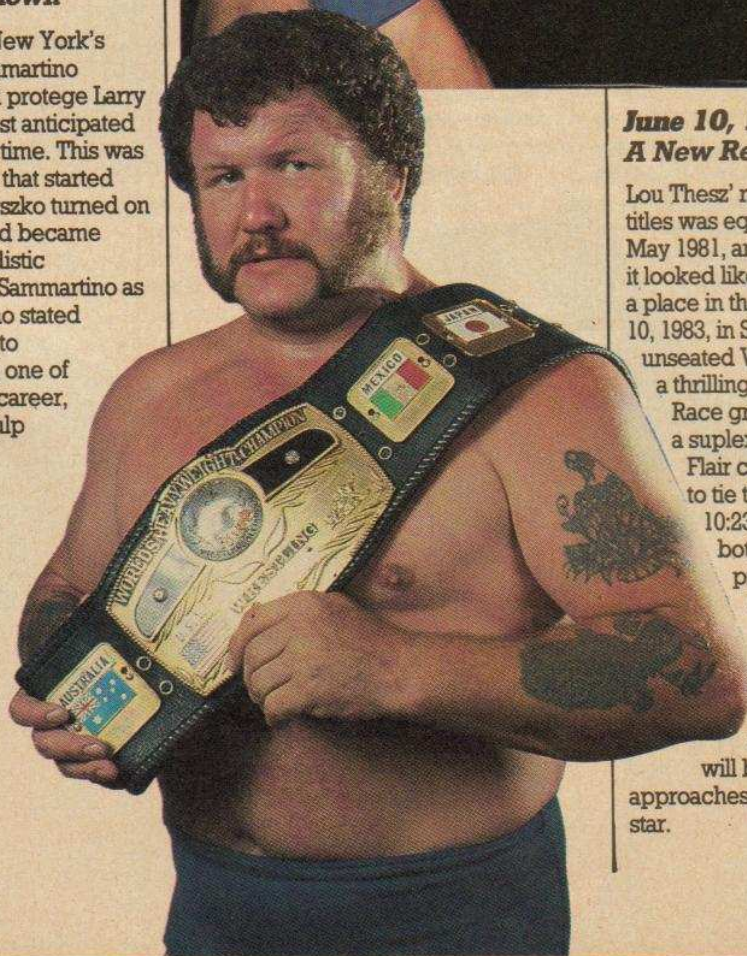
These days, the very idea of the WWF World champ meeting the NWA World champ in a title vs. title match is unthinkable. But five years ago, WWF kingpin Bob Backlund met NWA titlist Ric Flair in a historic bout at The Omni in Atlanta. This was a superb battle of two outstanding wrestlers: Backlund the

scientific master against Flair the scientific rulebreaker. At one point, Flair applied his famed figure-four leglock, but Backlund managed to break it. After 20 minutes of furious action, the contest fell out of the ring and both men were counted out. Unfortunately, a rematch was never signed. That was the last WWF title vs. NWA title match ever held, and, judging by the current environment in wrestling, it may never happen again.



August 9, 1980 Shea Stadium Showdown

In front of 40,671 fans at New York's Shea Stadium, Bruno Sammartino battled former friend and protege Larry Zbyszko in one of the most anticipated steel cage matches of all time. This was the culmination of a feud that started months earlier when Zbyszko turned on "The Living Legend," and became even hotter when the sadistic rulebreaker proclaimed Sammartino as "washed up." Sammartino stated he would retire if he lost to Zbyszko. Bruno wrestled one of the finest matches of his career, battering Zbyszko to a pulp before walking out victoriously to an uproarious standing ovation. Ironically, on that very same card Andre the Giant defeated Hulk Hogan. Years later, they would renew their rivalry.



June 10, 1983 A New Record Is Set

Lou Thesz' record of six NWA World titles was equaled by Harley Race in May 1981, and for more than two years it looked like the two men would share a place in the record book. But on June 10, 1983, in St. Louis, Missouri, Race unseated World champion Ric Flair in a thrilling best-of-three falls match. Race grabbed the upper hand with a suplex at 11:10 of the first fall, but Flair came back in the second fall to tie the bout via the figure-four at 10:23. At 6:17 of the final fall, both men had their shoulders pinned to the mat, but Race lifted his up just prior to the referee's third count to take his sole place in wrestling history. Currently, Ric Flair is on his fourth title reign and it will be years before he even approaches the record set by this great star.

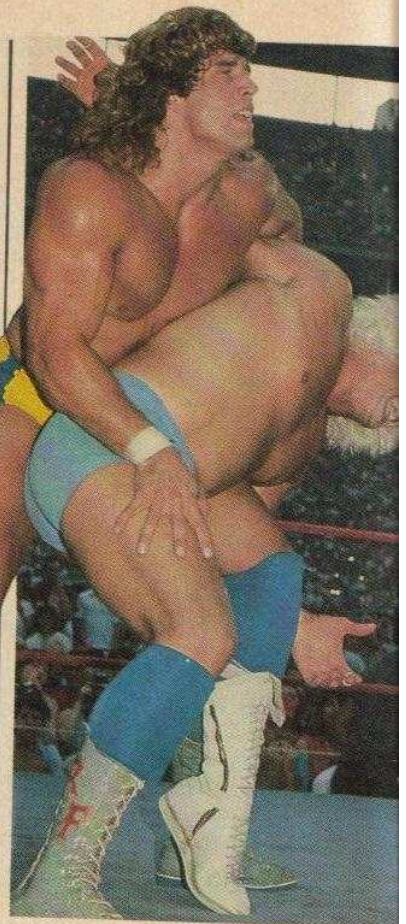


January 23, 1984 Dawn Of A New Era

He's a superstar now, but Hulk Hogan was the center of controversy back in January 1984. Shortly after Hogan's arrival in the WWF, former World champion Bob Backlund suffered an injury and bowed out of his title rematch against The Iron Sheik at Madison Square Garden. Despite his brief stay in the WWF, Hogan was declared the number-one contender to Sheik's belt and, amid much protest, was granted a title shot. As he has done so many times since then, Hogan proved his detractors wrong. He manhandled Sheik and won the belt in just five minutes and 40 seconds. It was the start of a remarkable title reign that still has no end in sight.

May 6, 1984 A Dream Fulfilled

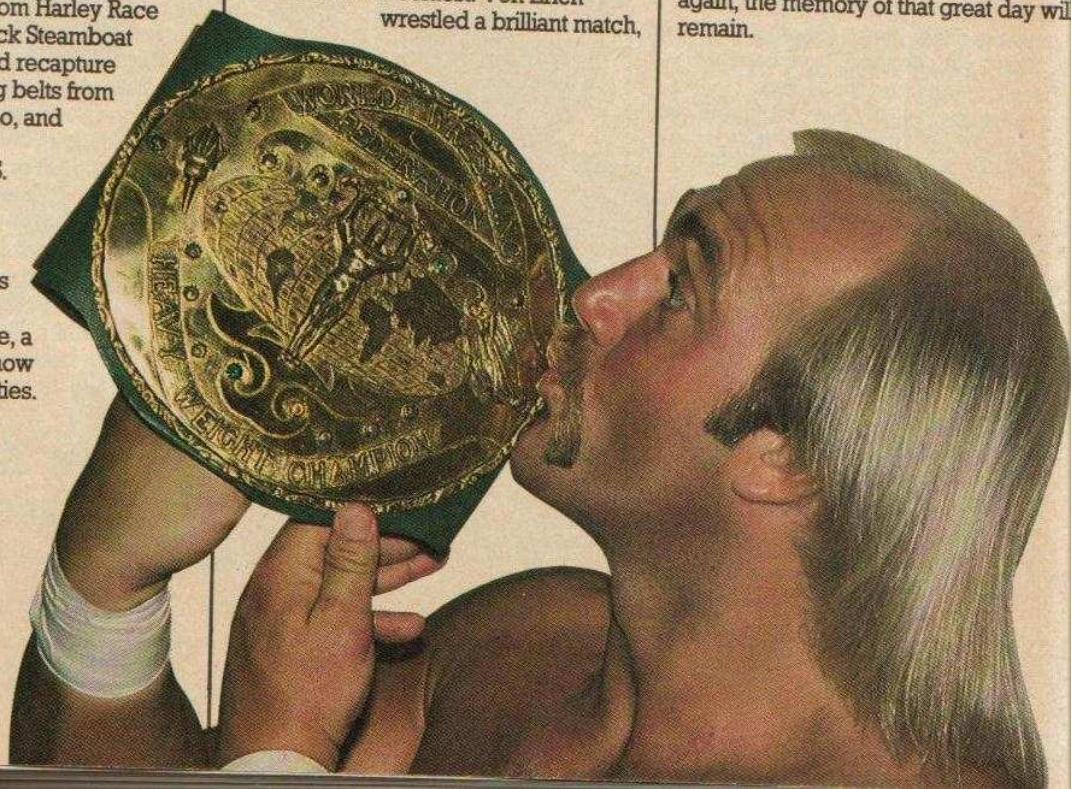
Kerry Von Erich's victory over Ric Flair for the NWA World heavyweight championship was a labor of love. Just three months earlier, the death of Kerry's brother David shocked the wrestling world, and the May 6 "Parade of Champions" at Texas Stadium was dedicated to his memory. Kerry also dedicated the match to his brother, and over 43,000 fans were on hand to see this historic contest. Von Erich wrestled a brilliant match,



and at 25:42 executed a perfect backslide to pin Flair. Kerry's title reign lasted only three weeks, but he had fulfilled a dream by winning the World championship. Kerry is currently trying to rebound from a motorcycle accident, but even if he doesn't wrestle again, the memory of that great day will remain.

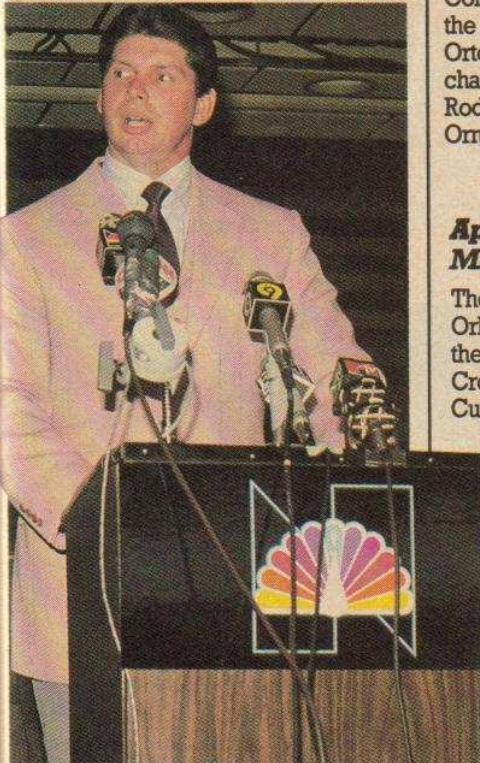
November 24, 1983 The Very First Supercard

Before there was WrestleMania there was Starrcade, the granddaddy of the supercards. A crowd of 15,447 fans viewed the first-ever Starrcade card at the Greensboro Coliseum as an estimated 30,000 more throughout the Mid-Atlantic states watched on closed-circuit TV. They saw Ric Flair regain the NWA World title from Harley Race in a cage match, Rick Steamboat and Jay Youngblood recapture the NWA World tag belts from Jack and Jerry Brisco, and Roddy Piper gain revenge against U.S. champion Greg Valentine in a dog collar chain match. More than four years later, Thanksgiving Day means Starrcade, a great annual event now held in two NWA cities.



March 31, 1985 The World Takes Notice

The first WrestleMania at Madison Square Garden drew more press coverage than the sport has ever known, capturing the imagination of the entire country. Wrestling was "in" with the yuppie crowd, and the rock 'n' wrestling connection was the reason why. Back then, rock star Cyndi Lauper was a regular feature at WWF shows, and wrestlers and WWF matches were



seen several times on MTV. In the main event, Hulk Hogan and Mr. T defeated Paul Orndorff and Roddy Piper when Hogan pinned Orndorff. Also, Wendi Richter defeated Lelani Kai for the WWF World women's championship.

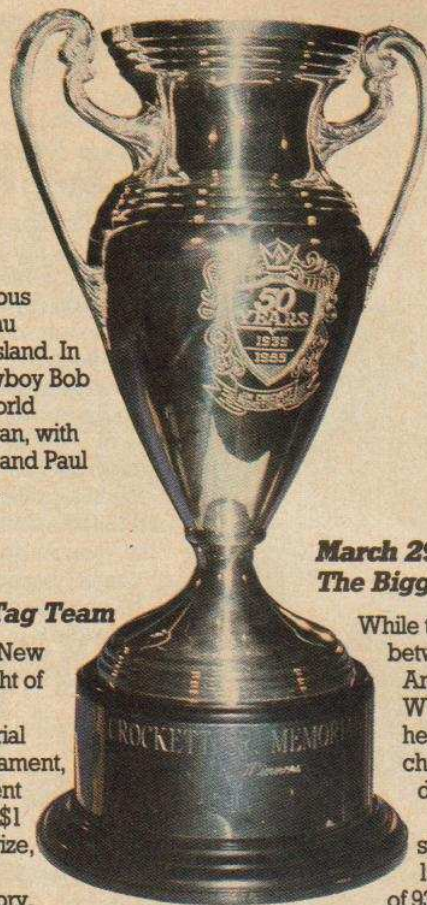
May 11, 1985 A Television Milestone

As wrestling peaked in the national spotlight, its return to national network television was only a matter of time. On May 11, 1985, at 11:30 p.m., wrestling returned to network TV after a 30-year absence with the premiere of *Saturday Night's Main Event*, a 90-minute WWF program on NBC. Vince McMahon did the play-by-play and Jesse Ventura provided the

color commentary for the show, which was taped the previous evening at the Nassau Coliseum on Long Island. In the main event, Cowboy Bob Orton met WWF World champion Hulk Hogan, with Roddy Piper, Mr. T, and Paul Orndorff at ringside.

April 19, 1986 Million Dollar Tag Team

The Superdome in New Orleans was the sight of the first annual Jim Crockett Sr. Memorial Cup tag team tournament, a two-day event that carried a \$1 million first prize, the largest in wrestling history. Top tag teams from around the country—plus Canada and Japan—converged on The Superdome for one full day of incredible action, highlighted by the final round matchup of two fan favorite teams: The Road Warriors vs. Magnum T.A. and Ronnie Garvin. No one there will ever forget the amazing test of strength between Animal and T.A., or the Warriors' victory when Animal pinned Garvin for the Cup and the cash.

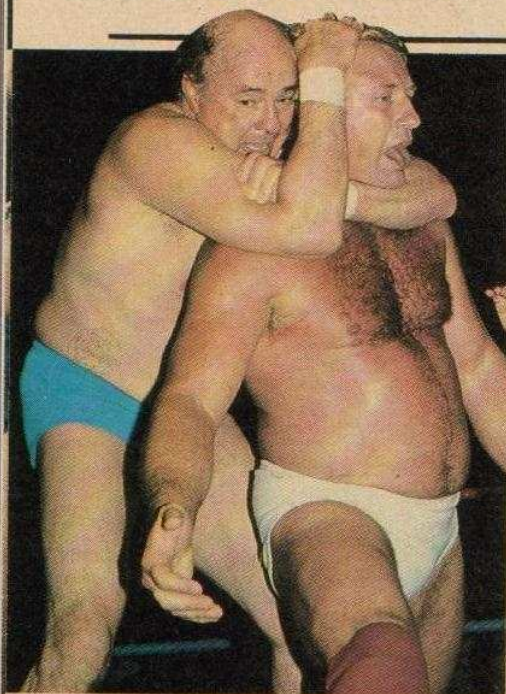


March 29, 1987 The Biggest Crowd Ever

While the epic battle between the undefeated Andre the Giant and WWF World heavyweight champion Hulk Hogan drew all the headlines, the real story of March 29, 1987, was the crowd of 93,173 fans who packed The Pontiac Silverdome in Pontiac, Michigan, for WrestleMania III. The crowd, which paid up to \$100 for a ringside seat, was a North American indoor attendance record; millions more watched on closed-circuit and pay-per-view TV. In the main event of the 13-match card, Hogan pinned his former friend and tag team partner after 12:01. And in an incredibly action-packed match, Rick Steamboat won the Intercontinental title from Randy Savage.



HONORABLE MENTIONS



May 10, 1981 A Legend Retires

When Verne Gagne retired in 1981 as AWA World champion after defeating Nick Bockwinkel, he closed the book on an incredible career and a remarkable record nine AWA World title reigns. Gagne's first AWA championship came in 1960, and over the years he captured the coveted gold from such stars as Gene Kiniski, Fritz Von Erich, Crusher, and Bockwinkel. Gagne's career and high level of wrestling excellence placed an indelible stamp on the history of the AWA, and his departure from the sport meant the ending of a very special era in professional wrestling. By even the strictest measures, Gagne was one of the greatest scientific wrestlers of all time. His legacy lives on in the AWA, where the sweet science is still held in high regard. But the hole his absence created might never be filled.



February 1984 All-American Feud

For most of his career, Sgt. Slaughter was one of the most hated men in wrestling, an ex-Marine drill sergeant reportedly kicked out of the Corps because he was too hard on his charges. But in February 1984, a feud developed between Slaughter, a patriotic American, and The Iron Sheik, a native of Teheran, Iran. During this series of matches, the fans rallied behind Slaughter, eventually voting him 1984 Inspirational Wrestler of the Year. As Slaughter's love for his country became more evident, he became one of the most loved individuals in wrestling history.

His fight for America grabbed headlines and captured the hearts of an entire nation.

May 29, 1984 A Night Of Excellence

For the first time in 20 years, the NWA returned to the New York metropolitan area for an incredible card at the Brendan Byrne Meadowlands Arena in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Stars from the Mid-Atlantic and Georgia areas and Puerto Rico were on hand for "A Night of Champions" during which no fewer than eight titles were on the line. In the main event, Ric Flair pinned Rick Steamboat in 31 minutes and 29 seconds to keep his NWA World title. Wrestlers on the undercard included Dusty Rhodes, Jake Roberts, Stan Hansen, The Road Warriors, Carlos Colon, and King Kong Bundy.

February 18, 1985 The War To Settle The Score

It all started during an awards ceremony at Madison Square Garden in December 1984, when Roddy Piper attacked Lou Albano, Cyndi Lauper, and Lauper's manager, Dave Wolff. To the fans' amazement and delight, Hulk Hogan rushed to the aid of his formerly hated rival. And after weeks of televised baiting, "The War To Settle The Score" was signed between the two enemies. Broadcast live on MTV, the Piper-Hogan match was held in the Garden and captured the imagination of a nation of both wrestling and rock 'n' roll fans. The involvement of celebrities overshadowed the

importance of the match, however, which ended when Mr. T and Lauper interfered. The winner: Hogan by disqualification.



October-December 1986 A Very Special Tournament

After covering so many wrestling tournaments during its storied history, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* sponsored one of its own in 1986: the first annual \$50,000 PWI/UWF Challenge Cup Tournament. The tournament, which included the greatest stars in the UWF, began on October 31 in Houston when Terry Taylor defeated Buddy Landell. It ended on December 12 at the Sam Houston Coliseum in Houston as "Dr. Death" Steve Williams defeated then-UWF champion One Man Gang in a thrilling match lasting 21 minutes and 43 seconds. Williams called his victory in the tournament "one of the great moments of my career." □

UNOFFICIAL / OFFICIAL AWARDS OF THE **PRO** Wrestling YEARS ILLUSTRATED

In our October 1987 issue, when we polled you regarding the best and worst of the **PWI** years (see results on page 62), we also asked that you come up with some "Unofficial Official Awards." These are unusual and outrageous ratings categories that we wanted you to invent—then choose an appropriate recipient for said "award." Here's a selection of 25 of your best entries.

Bad Guys Finish First: The late, great Dan Shocket
—Dan Douglass, Hermitage, PA

Beating A Dead Horse Award: Larry Zbyszko and Mil Mascaras—not one major title!
—James Kline, Ashton, MD

Best PWI Centerfold: Hulk Hogan (September 1984 issue)
—Michael Robinson, Greensboro, NC

Worst Centerfold Ever: Baby Doll (November 1986 issue)
—Thomas Hamaty, Philipsburg, PA

Best Scientific Wrestler Of The PWI Years: Bob Backlund
—Thomas Grant, New York

Best Theme Music Of The PWI Years: The Road Warriors; Black Sabbath's "Iron Man"
—Mindi McGrath, Charlotte Hall, MD

Biggest Dork Of The PWI Years: Honky Tonk Man
—Jay Grymyr, Las Vegas, NV

Biggest Mistake Of The PWI Years: Andre the Giant's betrayal of Hulk Hogan, which trashed his 22-year career
—Jerry Morris Jr., Rosweel, GA

Finally! A Russian With Hair!: Soldat Ustinov
—Derek Wise, Reading, PA

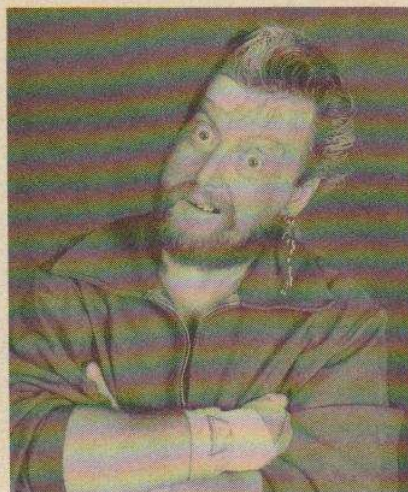
Full Moon Award: To Hulk Hogan, who's defended his title about as often as the full moon appears
—Gene Holman, Baltimore

Most Tasteless Behavior In Interviews: Ric Flair
—Carolina Gill, Anchorage, AK

MIA: Sgt. Slaughter
—Jim Bialaszewski, Fredonia, NY

Most Likely To Get Beaten Up By Rock 'n' Roll Express Fans: Eddie Ellner
—Terence Riess, Warren, MI

Most Overrated And Undeserving NWA World Champion Of The PWI Years: Tommy Rich
—Dominic Macika, Westland, MI



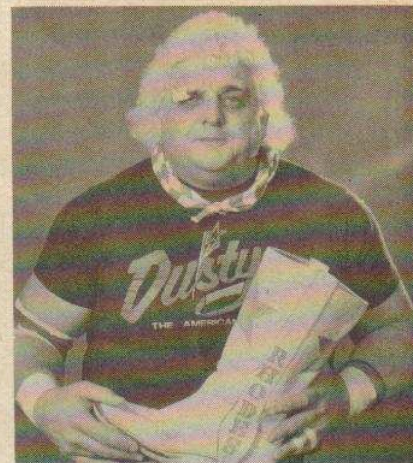
Capt. Lou Wanna-Be: Sir Oliver Humperdink
—B.J. Eaglesfield, Elkhart, IN

Norman Bates Award: Kevin Sullivan
—Eric McHugh, Toms River, NJ

Put Him Out To Pasture, But He'd Eat All The Grass And The Cows Would Starve: Dusty Rhodes
—James Noble, Eagle Lake, FL

Saddest Moment Of The PWI Years: Roddy Piper's retirement
—Jeff Gay, Lakeville, MA

Scalp Of The PWI Years: Bam Bam Bigelow & Bill Apter (tie)
—Michael Messier, Burke, VA



Best PWI Contest: Dusty Rhodes trivia contest to win Dusty's boots
—Derek Tenbusch, Lansing, MI

Tammy Bakker Award For Best Makeup: Adrian Adonis
—Valerie Spinks & Eddie Connors, Framingham, MA

Throw Your Remote Control Through The TV: The WWF "Slammys" on MTV
—Joe Finnerty, West Roxbury, MA

Whatever Happened To? John Studd
—Peter Young, St. Augustine Shores, FL

Worst Wrestling League Of The PWI Years: AWA
—John Mealing, Lansdale, PA

Wow! Wow! Wow! Oh! Look At That, Tony! AHHHHHHHHHHH!: David Crockett
—Tim Wing, Minneapolis □

THE FIRST 100 ISSUES—

BACK IN THE October 1987 edition of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, Craig Peters' "In Focus" column included a ballot that asked fans to respond to 20 questions concerning wrestling in the *PWI* years. The result was a list of bests and worsts, plus a collection of "Unofficial Official Awards" that deserve their own section (they can be found on page 61).

Before presenting the "winners" (some top finishers may not be too pleased with their dubious award) and discussing the runners-up, we thought you might like to know something about who you, the *PWI* readers, are—based, of course, on the responses to our fan poll.

Nearly three-fourths of you—72.2 percent—fall between the ages of 12 and 18; 42.7 percent fall between the ages of 13 and 15. The largest group of you—16.2 percent—are 15 years old, but a nearly equal number—16.9 percent—are 20 years of age or older. You come from every state of

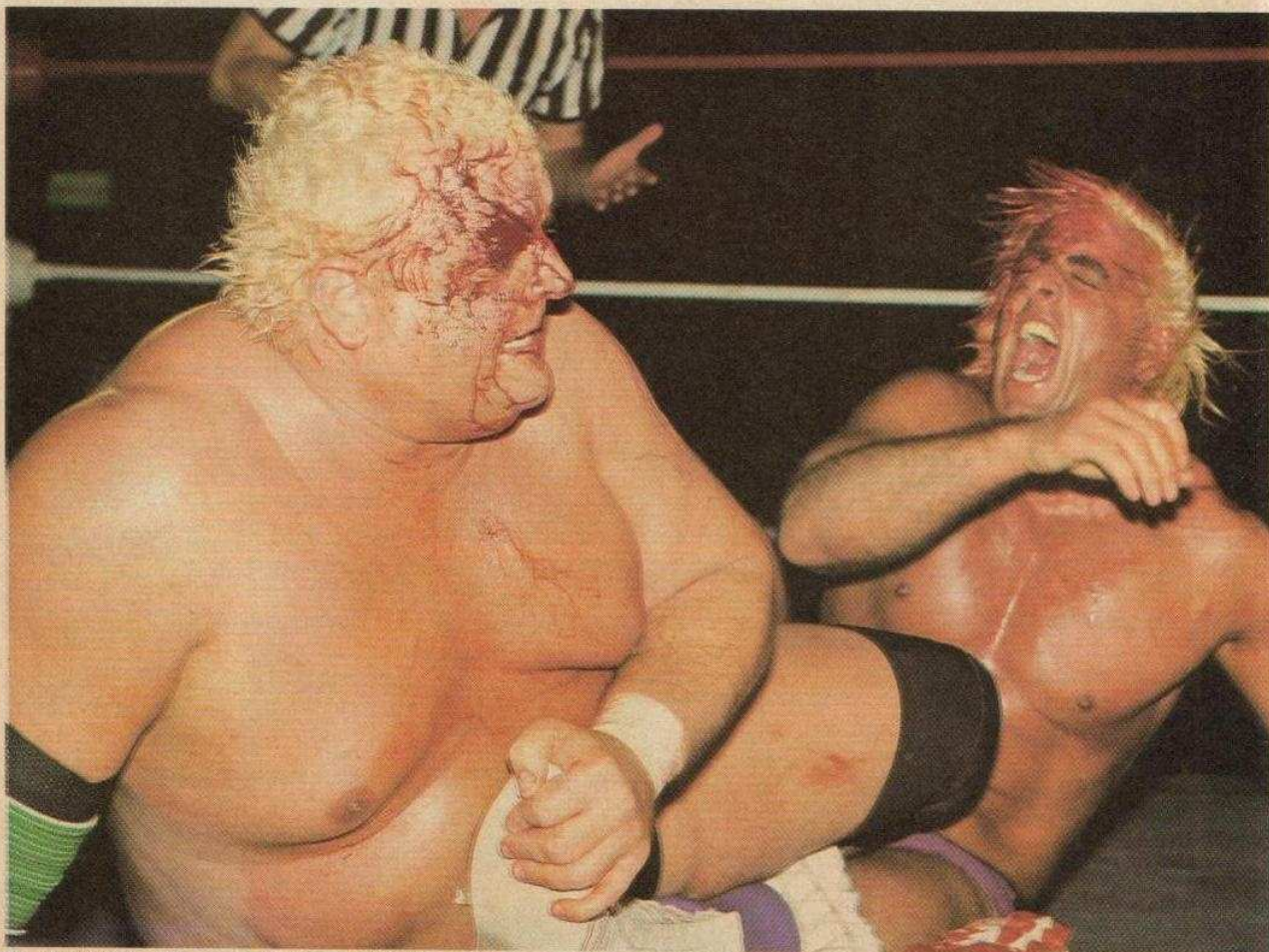
the union as well as from Canada, but most of you are clustered around the major wrestling nerve centers: the Carolinas, New York, Baltimore-Washington, Atlanta, and Detroit.

Considering all ballots we've received up to press time, the youngest poll respondent was seven-year-old David Polanski of Jewett City, Connecticut; the oldest was 54-year-old Ross LaPorte of Pasadena, California.

The average respondent to our poll has been reading *PWI* for about four years. As you might expect, there was some variation within the age groups: Those readers 14 and under had been reading *PWI* for an average of about three years; the 15 to 19 age group averaged about four years; readers 20 and over averaged just under five years.

That's who you are. Now let's take a look at who you like . . . and who you don't like. Here are your choices for the best—and worst—of the *PWI* years.

A SPECIAL FAN POLL



The feud rages on . . . and on . . . and on . . .

**BEST SINGLE WRESTLER OF THE PWI YEARS:
RIC FLAIR**

Flair, a four-time NWA World heavyweight champion and four-time recipient of Wrestler of the Year honors, was a decisive finisher in this category. Hulk Hogan was a runaway first runner-up. Beyond Flair and Hogan, your voting tightened up as many favorites received large numbers of responses. The top five was rounded out by Dusty Rhodes, Roddy Piper, and Nikita Koloff.

**WORST SINGLE WRESTLER OF THE PWI YEARS:
FRANK WILLIAMS**

No one wrestler received a great number of votes; it seems that everyone named their favorite preliminary grappler, though a few of you named main-event stars you clearly didn't like. Williams (appropriately?) received the edge by default as the vote was split so many ways. Other finishers included Randy and Bill Mulkey, S.D. Jones, Danny Davis, Uncle Elmer, Mario Mancini, Jack Hart, Steve Lombardi, and comedian Andy Kaufman.

**BEST TAG TEAM OF THE PWI YEARS:
THE ROAD WARRIORS**

"The Legion of Doom," three-time winners of the Tag Team of the Year award, dominated this category in much the way they have dominated wrestling. The Rock 'n' Roll Express received the bulk of the votes that didn't go to the Warriors. Nobody else came close. The British Bulldogs, the now-de-

funct team of Rick Steamboat and Jay Youngblood, and The Hart Foundation were also-rans in the voting.

**WORST TAG TEAM OF THE PWI YEARS:
RANDY & BILL MULKEY**

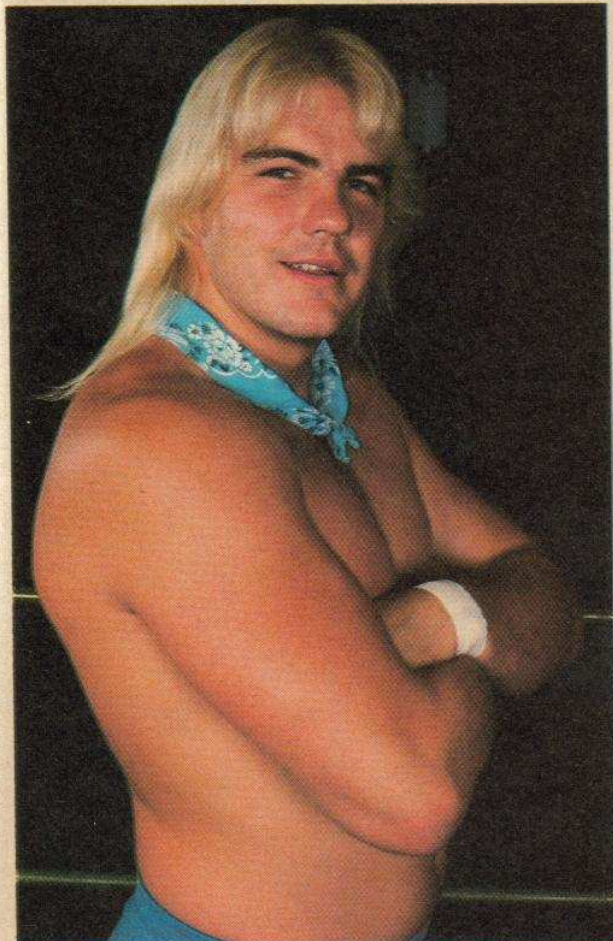
To the best of our knowledge, they've scored only one pin-fall victory. Randy and Bill Mulkey are perhaps the most hapless team in wrestling history, and your voting reflected that fact. But the Mulkeys' unusual popularity kept the voting close. A few votes either way and any number of teams could have earned this "honor," including Buddy Rose and Doug Somers, Demolition, The Moondogs, and The Machines.

**MOST IMPROVED WRESTLER OF THE PWI
YEARS: BARRY WINDHAM**

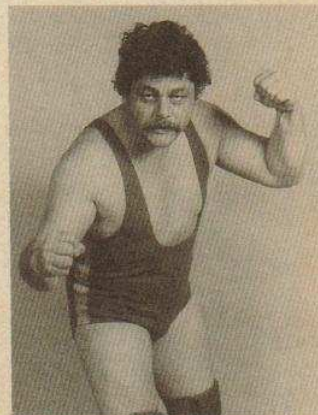
He's gone from being known as merely the son of Blackjack Mulligan to Western States champion and a top contender for the NWA World championship. Windham has earned your respect, which was reflected in this close voting. Once again, a small margin of votes separated the top six, which was rounded out by Hulk Hogan, Steve Williams, Randy Savage, Rick Steamboat, and Curt Hennig.

**FEUD OF THE PWI YEARS:
RIC FLAIR VS. DUSTY RHODES**

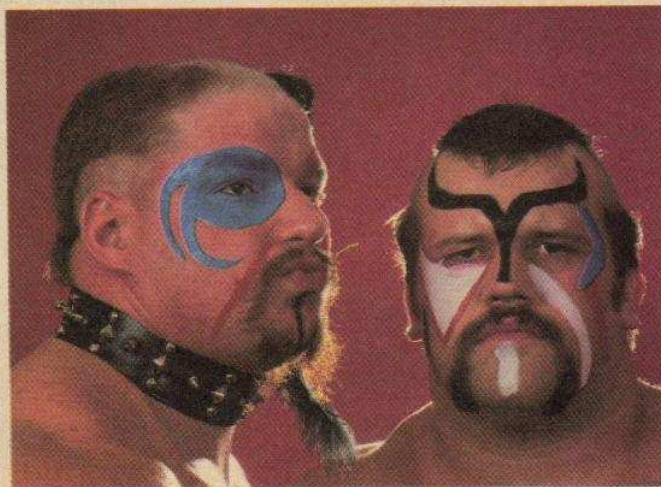
No feud has dominated the PWI years quite like the one between Flair and Rhodes. They've engaged in some of the



He just keeps getting better



The worst of the worst—sorry, fellas!



Could anyone have possibly beaten them?

greatest matches of the decade, and scored a clear runaway in your voting. After Flair-Rhodes, the vote was widely split. Interestingly enough, none of the runner-up feuds are currently active: The Freebirds vs. the Von Erichs, Tommy Rich vs. Buzz Sawyer, Roddy Piper vs. Jimmy Snuka, and The Iron Sheik vs. Sgt. Slaughter.

**BEST MATCH OF THE PWI YEARS:
RANDY SAVAGE VS. RICK STEAMBOAT
AT WRESTLEMANIA III**

How ironic—Andre the Giant vs. Hulk Hogan at WrestleMania III was the most anticipated match in history, but Steamboat's victory over Savage for the Intercontinental title stole the show. And your voting in this category. It scored a narrow victory over the famous Jimmy Snuka vs. Bob Backlund cage match at Madison Square Garden, when Snuka executed his dive off the top of the cage. Kerry Von Erich's May 6, 1984 victory over Flair for the NWA World title also received many votes.

**BEST MANAGER OF THE PWI YEARS:
CAPT. LOU ALBANO**

No surprise here. The three-time Manager of the Year has left an indelible mark on the sport and, despite his recent retirement, was a runaway winner in this category. Nobody else came close, although Paul Ellering, manager of The Road Warriors, received considerable consideration along with Bobby Heenan. Managers of rulebreakers dominated

the rest of your voting, rounded out by J.J. Dillon, The Grand Wizard, Jim Cornette, and Fred Blassie.

BEST VALET OF THE PWI YEARS: PRECIOUS

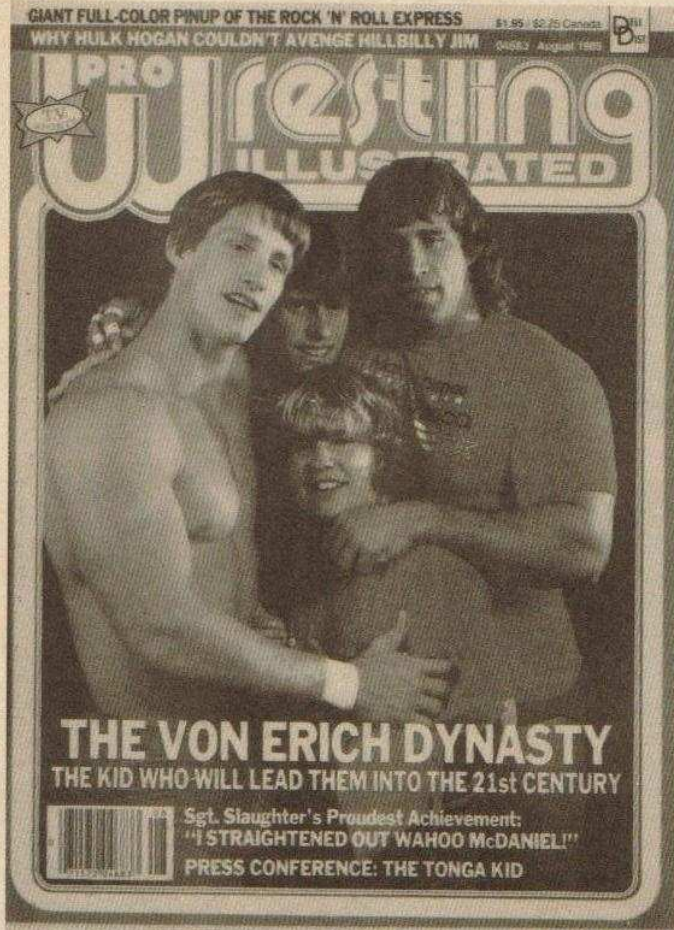
Few valets have been as controversial or have remained in the spotlight for so long. But Precious has had a tremendous influence on the career of Jim Garvin, which was reflected in her decisive victory in this category. Missy Hyatt hasn't done much recently, but still received more than her share of votes. Dark Journey, Elizabeth (who might have won if her vote hadn't been split by the manager's category), Baby Doll, and Fallen Angel were other contenders.

FAVORITE PWI WRITER: BILL APTER

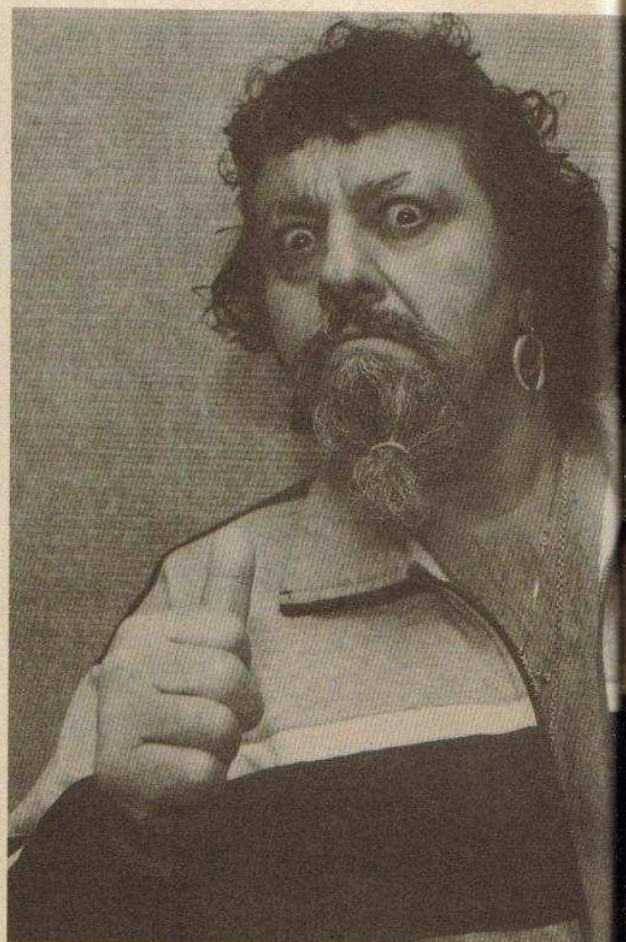
Bill Apter is to print journalism what Gordon Solie is to broadcasting. Apter's years of experience and unusual insight have earned him a spot in your hearts. He was an easy winner. Surprisingly, our rulebreaking columnist Eddie Ellner is also very popular and was second runner-up. The late, great Dan Shocket, whose place was filled by Ellner, finished third. Veteran scribe Matt Brock and female reporter Liz Hunter were also top considerations.

WORST PWI WRITER: EDDIE ELLNER

In this category, the writer's opinion seemed to be more important than the quality of his writing. Eddie Ellner is a talented reporter, but his outspokenness made him a narrow winner over Dave Rosenbaum, another fine writer with un-



August 1985: Our worst story ever



He's managed more men to more championships than anyone

usual views. The late Dan Shocket is still "fondly" remembered by our readers. He was also an outstanding writer with different views. Just a few votes separated Liz Hunter from Stu Saks and Craig Peters.

**FAVORITE PWI STORY EVER:
"MAGNUM T.A.'S MESSAGE TO HIS FANS:
'THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS!'"**

This *PWI* exclusive, which appeared in the June 1987 issue, was a heartwarming message of gratitude from the hospitalized superstar. It was your choice by a very narrow margin over several other favorites: "Hulk Hogan At The Crossroads: Wrestling Or Hollywood?" (December 1982), "Great Scot! Rowdy Roddy Piper Turns Good!" (January 1987), and "Exclusive! Photos Of A Lifetime! Hulk Hogan: From The Cradle To The Throne" (January 1986).

**WORST PWI STORY EVER:
"THE VON ERICH DYNASTY: THE KID WHO WILL
LEAD THEM INTO THE 21ST CENTURY"**

We admit it: We went overboard. In our August 1985 issue, we simply got too caught up in the Von Erich hype when there were many other young wrestlers more deserving of a *PWI* cover story. The chances of Chris Von Erich becoming a major star are very slim, and this story was deserving of your disapproval. Another story, "Women's Wrestling Comes Of Age: Is Wendi Richter More Popular Than Hulk Hogan"

(April 1986) is even more preposterous now than it was then.

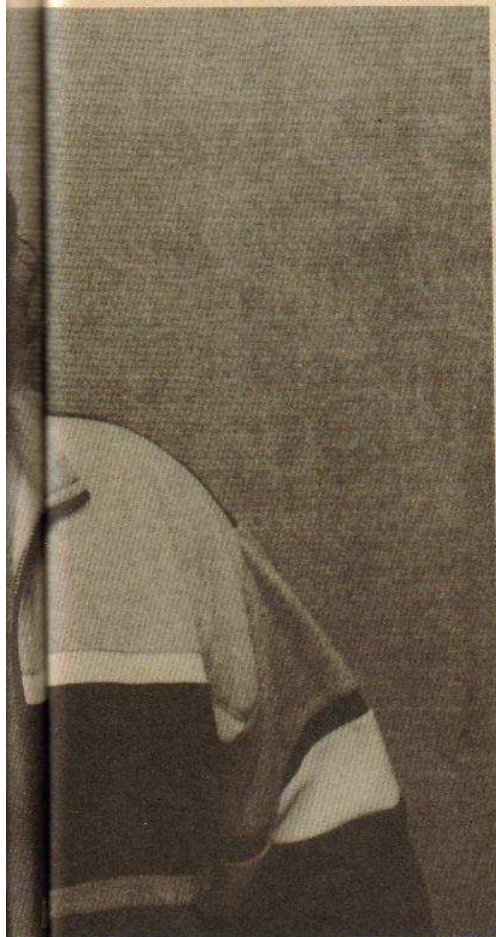
**BIGGEST NEWS STORY OF THE PWI YEARS:
WWF EXPANSION**

Many different stories were mentioned, and once again your voting was very close. But we'd have to agree with your final choice in this category. The WWF's nationwide expansion and unprecedented growth was *the* story of the *PWI* years. It influenced virtually every aspect of the entire sport. Others receiving votes: Magnum T.A.'s accident and recovery, the Von Erich tragedies, Hulk Hogan's winning of the WWF title, World Class' pulling out of the NWA, and Hogan's defeat of Andre the Giant at WrestleMania III.

**PREDICTIONS FOR THE BIGGEST EVENT IN
WRESTLING OVER THE NEXT 100 ISSUES OF PWI**

You provided a wide-ranging assortment of predictions, but two in particular were mentioned most often: a title unification bout between WWF champ Hulk Hogan and NWA champ Ric Flair, and that somebody from the NWA, possibly Lex Luger or Nikita Koloff, would go to the WWF and defeat Hogan for the title. The Flair-Hogan unification match was mentioned most often—by far. It's quite apparent that this is one of the greatest hopes of wrestling fans. Other interesting predictions:

From Tim Stamp of Brockport, New York: Bruno Sammartino will win the WWF belt again . . . Kelly Kroh of Renton, Washington: The NWA, AWA, UWF, World Class, and



The best writer works on your favorite story



The greatest match since 1979

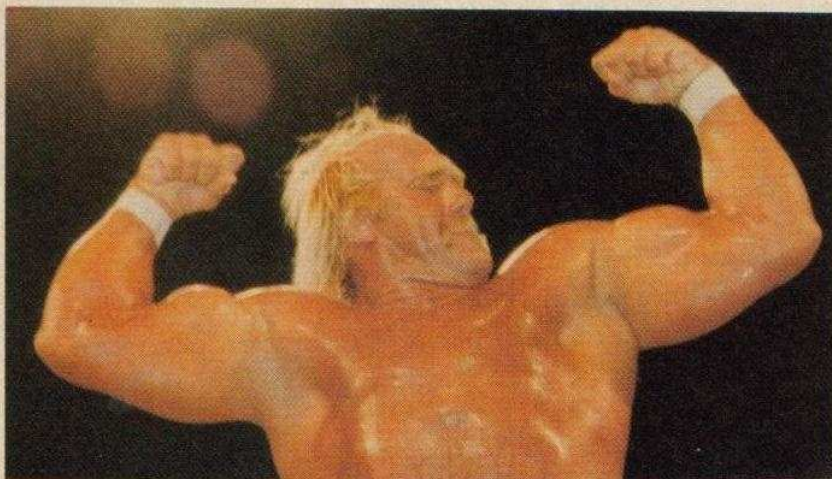


Valet victorious

Mid-Southern areas will combine for one big Supercard at The Metrodome . . . Michelle Miele of Holmdel, New Jersey: Ric Flair will dump The Four Horsemen; David Oulman of Owatonna, Minnesota, added that Flair will team with Dusty Rhodes against the Horsemen . . . Vince McMahon will buy out the AWA, predicted Kenneth Simmons of West Hartford, Connecticut . . . Magnum T.A.'s first match back will be the biggest event, according to James McHone of Charlotte, North Carolina . . . An unusual prediction from Chris Tchida of Coon Rapids, Minnesota: Roddy Piper will come out of retirement to feud with Sir Oliver Humperdink . . . Watch out, Hulk Hogan! Brian Balfour of Toledo, Ohio, predicts that Killer Khan will permanently blind you by spitting the green fog into your eyes! . . . Adam Proteau of Toronto, Ontario, thinks that the AWA will fold . . . And finally, Jeremy Ross of New York City predicts that "PWf's next 100 issues will be as great as the first 100." We'll certainly do our best to make his prediction come true!

**FAVORITE PW/COLUMN EVER:
RINGSIDE with Bill Apter**

You want information about wrestling, and "Ringside" with Bill Apter certainly does its job of keeping a finger on the pulse of the wrestling world. This monthly column was clearly your favorite, receiving over 55 percent of the votes. Eddie Ellner's controversial "Off The Top Rope" maddens the fans but entertains them as well. "Scouting Reports," "Ratings Analysis," and "Wrestling Enquirer" were your other favorites.



Your prediction: soon to be blinded for life



The dean of announcers

**WORST PW/COLUMN EVER:
OFF THE TOP ROPE with Eddie Ellner**

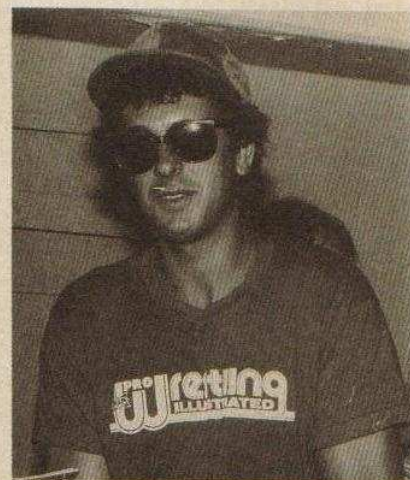
You love it, you hate it, but you can't live without it. "Off The Top Rope" with Eddie Ellner received over 80 percent of the votes in this category, making it a landslide winner. "Media Review" (our newest column), Liz Hunter's "On Assignment," "From The Desk Of . . ." by Stu Saks, and "No Holds Barred" by Dave Rosenbaum were also the subject of your poison pens.

BEST TELEVISION ANNOUNCER OF THE PWf YEARS: GORDON SOLIE

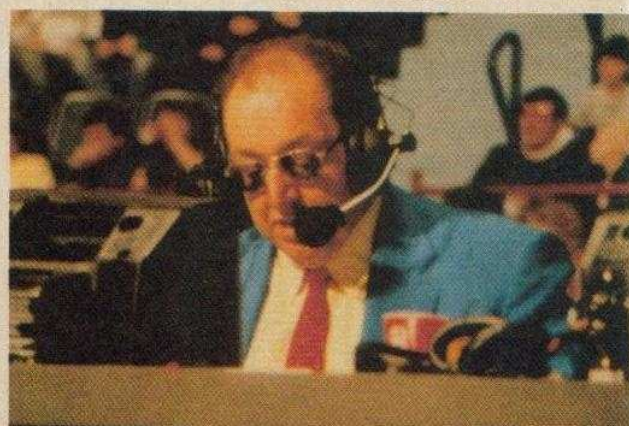
No announcer in wrestling is more respected, recognizable, and knowledgeable than Gordon Solie, a clear-cut winner in this category. You also liked Jesse Ventura's controversial but straightforward manner and made him an easy number two. Tony Schiavone, Lance Russell, and Gene Okerlund rounded out the top five.

WORST TELEVISION ANNOUNCER OF THE PWf YEARS: GORILLA MONSOON

One reader called him "Gorilla Buffoon." Another called him "the worst thing to happen to televised wrestling since Antonino Rocca's old show." But although Monsoon ended up the "winner" in this category, it wasn't easy. David Crockett irritates more than his share of viewers on *World Championship Wrestling*. Vince McMahon was criticized for his dishonesty. Larry Nelson and Bill Mercer rounded out the dishonor roll. □



His is the worst column of all



Give me a break!

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

THE YEARS IN REVIEW

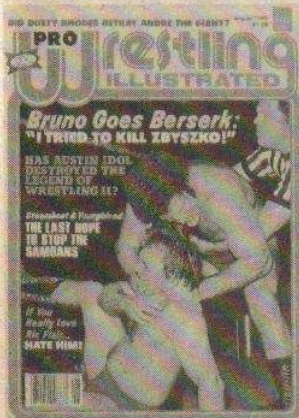
SINCE ITS INCEPTION in the March 1983 edition of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, the annual "Year In Review" section has become an extremely popular addition to our year-end awards issue. In bits and pieces, both serious and humorous, this feature each year has provided a lively retrospective of professional wrestling during the previous 12 months.

For this special 100th anniversary issue, we've chosen to present the very best of the "Year In Review" sections, reprinting one page per year from past year-end issues. And because the feature's first retrospective was of 1982, we've pored through wrestling history to bring you an *all-new* look back at the early *PWI* years, 1979 through 1981, plus an early retrospective of the sport thus far in 1987.

"The *PWI* Years." The phrase encompasses quite a remarkable segment of wrestling history. Comparing the sport in 1979 to the sport in 1987 brings to vivid clarity an incredible number of changes.

And *PWI* has changed as well, growing and expanding and maturing to cover a sport that itself was undergoing the very same changes. Along the way we had a lot of fun, and covered some very important stories:

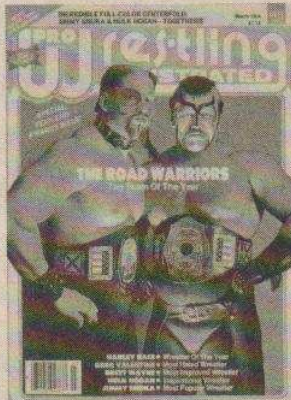
THE *PWI* YEARS saw the sport's greatest star ever—Bruno Sammartino—become involved in his most vicious feud ever—against Larry Zbyszko. It was a war of teacher against student, of "Living Legend" against "New Living Legend," of measured experience against youthful brashness. It was a war that carried wrestling from the '70s into the '80s, that gripped the imagination of the entire wrestling world, and that enraged Bruno to the very depths of his soul. It was the first all-out war of the *PWI* years.



THE *PWI* YEARS saw Hulk Hogan travel the rocky road from fan favorite to rulebreaker and back to fan favorite; from Memphis and Georgia and Florida to the WWF to the AWA and back to the WWF; from obscure preliminary wrestler to top title contender to genuine media superstar. Over the course of the *PWI* years, Hogan has grown to transcend the sport itself, nevertheless remaining down-to-earth as he instructs his fans to say their prayers, take their vitamins, and be true to themselves.



THE *PWI* YEARS saw the coming to power of a tag team dynasty. The Road Warriors, managed by Paul Ellering, burst onto the mat scene in 1983 and shocked the wrestling world with their power and aggressiveness. They also shocked *PWI* readers by winning an unprecedented three straight honors as Tag Team of the Year: 1983 through 1985. Indeed, Hawk and Animal have set a standard for tag team wrestling that will remain unsurpassable for a long, long time to come.



THE *PWI* YEARS saw the bitter-sweet saga of Magnum T.A. Magnum broke into the pro ranks about the time the first issue of *PWI* hit the newsstands. By 1983, his name had become synonymous with wrestling excellence; by 1985, T.A. was a certified superstar and a fixture in the Top 10 and Most Popular ratings. In 1986, T.A. was critically injured in an auto accident; 1987 saw a remarkable recovery from near-paralysis. We pray that when we publish our 200th issue, we'll be reviewing a Magnum T.A. ring comeback.

THE *PWI* YEARS SAW ALL THIS—AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...

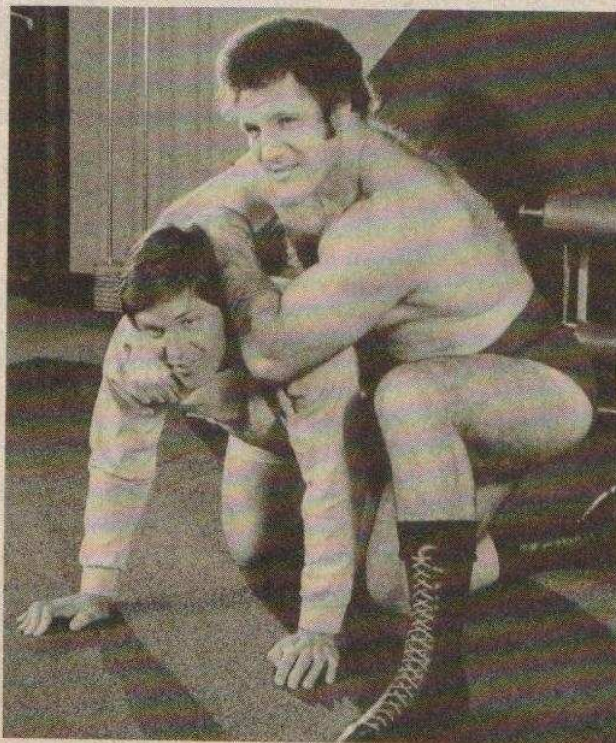
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THE YEAR
IN REVIEW

79

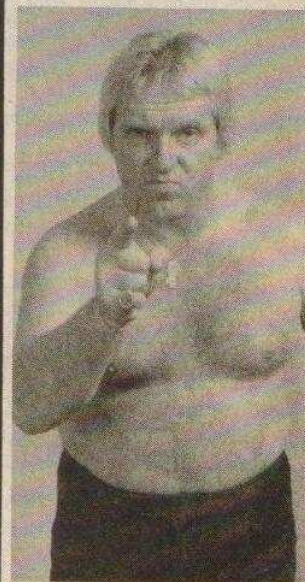
THE REST, AS THEY SAY,
IS HISTORY

The premier issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, cover dated September 1979, arrived at newsstands nationwide in mid-June. Now commanding upwards of \$100 from serious collectors, the magazine featured "An Open Letter To Rick Steamboat", a "Press Conference" with Bruno Sammartino, a cover story featuring Mil Mascaras and Dusty Rhodes, and many other stories and features. Initially bi-monthly, demand for *PWI* was so great that the magazine was soon published nine times per year, then became a monthly publication shortly thereafter.



THE LIVING LEGEND MEETS A PITCHING LEGEND

It was only appropriate that Bruno Sammartino and Tom Seaver should meet on an installment of the TV series *Greatest Sports Legends*. After all, both men have truly become legends in their respective sports—pro wrestling and pro baseball. Bruno obviously took it easy on host Tom, as the righthander went on to reach the plateau of 300 victories after escaping from Sammartino's hold.

PORTRAIT OF THE MANAGER
AS A YOUNG BRAIN

Bobby "The Brain" Heenan, managing in the AWA in 1979, was fined \$10,000 and suspended indefinitely for hitting AWA President Stanley Blackburn in a ring in Minneapolis. "That wasn't no \$10,000 punch," said "The Brain" at the time. "I didn't get my money's worth. If I had known the fine was going to be that heavy, I would have hit him twice."

OH YEAH? WELL, I CAN
BEAT YOU WITH ONE ARM
TIED BEHIND MY BACK!

Five days after winning the NWA World title from Harley Race, Dusty Rhodes sustained a hair-line fracture in his arm after he was attacked by Terry Funk just before his first rematch with the former champ. Though Race offered to postpone the match, Dusty insisted that they go ahead with the bout, as he was unwilling to disappoint the capacity crowd. Race easily regained the title from the one-armed Dream.

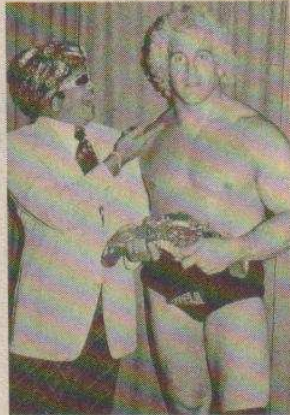
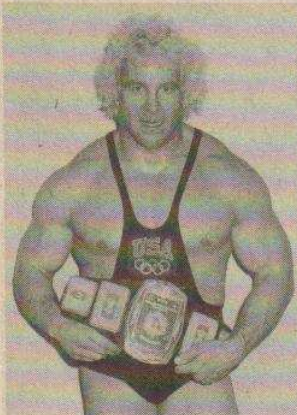
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THE YEAR
IN REVIEW

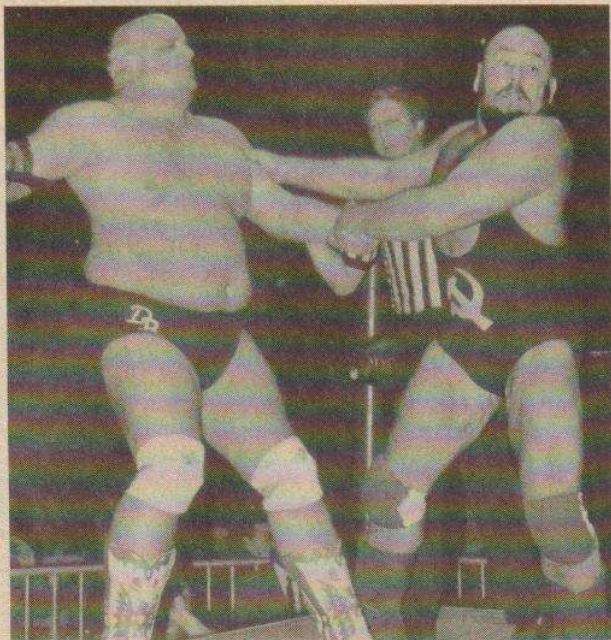
80

ONE GOOD REASON TO CLEAR THE OLD BOWLING
AWARDS OUT OF THE TROPHY CASE

Ken Patera electrified the wrestling world by winning the Intercontinental belt from Pat Patterson on April 21. Four days later, he won the Missouri belt from Kevin Von Erich. Patera successfully defended both titles for over six months. Though he failed some months later to take the NWA title from Harley Race, even his worst critics began to give him his due as a great wrestler.

IF WE HAD TO HAVE SOMEBODY AS A VALET, WE'D
RATHER TAKE MISSY HYATT

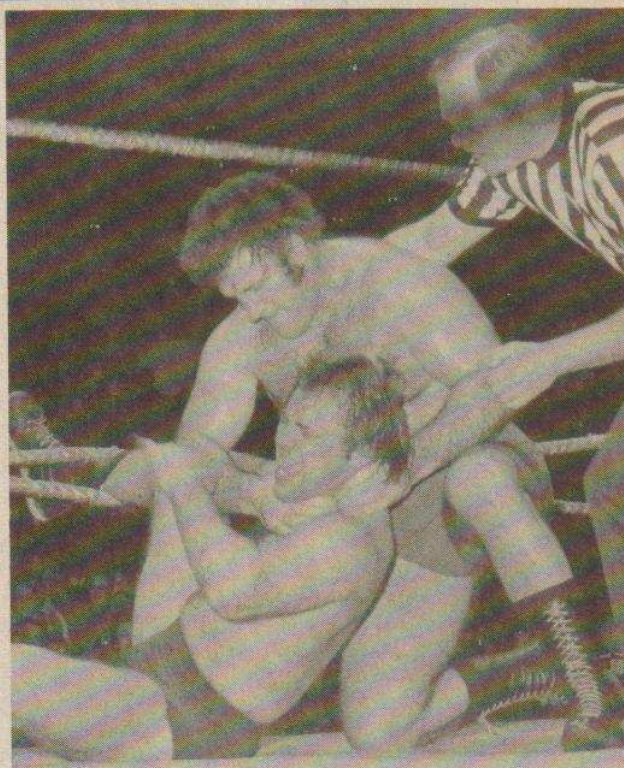
It was one of the strangest prizes ever offered for winning a grudge match. Dusty Rhodes' defeat of Ivan Koloff gained him a ravishing redheaded valet—none other than Koloff's manager at the time, Sir Oliver Humperdink. Dusty's erstwhile nemesis abided by the conditions, disbanded his evil gaggle of confirmed rulebreakers, and for the next month struggled against his own twisted tendencies to carry out Rhodes' every request.

WOULD HE WALK OUT OF
CABINET MEETINGS FOR
TITLE DEFENSES?

For wrestling fans, the highlight of the heated 1980 presidential campaign between Ronald Reagan and incumbent Jimmy Carter came when longtime Carter friend Mr. Wrestling II had a quick *tete-a-masque* with the President in the oval office. Rumors immediately began swirling that in the event of a Carter reelection, II would be offered a high-visibility post in the administration, possibly involving one of the many domestic social welfare programs Carter had planned for his second term. The rumors were promptly



squelched when Reagan beat Carter by a landslide in November.

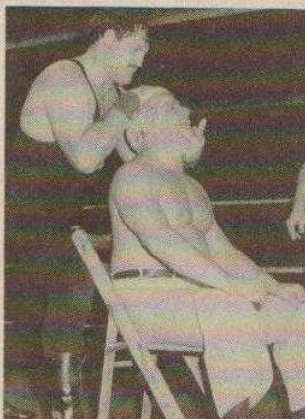
IT'S A GOOD THING IT HAPPENED *INSIDE* THE GARDEN;
OUTSIDE, ON THE STREETS OF NEW YORK CITY, IT'S
POSSIBLE THAT NO ONE WOULD HAVE NOTICED

A long-simmering feud came to an explosive conclusion when normally mild-mannered Bruno Sammartino was disqualified for trying to choke former protege Larry Zbyszko to death before a record 26,061 fans in Madison Square Garden and watching on closed-circuit at the adjoining Felt Forum. "Something inside of me just snapped," Bruno admitted later.

★★★ 19 THE YEAR 81 IN REVIEW ★★★

MAYBE NOT, BUT SAM DONALDSON MIGHT ATTACK MOAMMAR KHADAFY!

For several weeks, Sgt. Slaughter was taunting WWF television commentator Pat Patterson. Slaughter had a standing offer of \$5,000 to any man who could break his cobra clutch. When wrestlers accepted the offer—and failed to break the hold—Slaughter would stalk over to Patterson and ask him if he was man enough to accept the challenge, eventually upping the offer to \$10,000. Patterson finally accepted, and after it was over a controversy erupted as to whether he broke the hold or Slaughter released it. But in explaining why he held out for so long

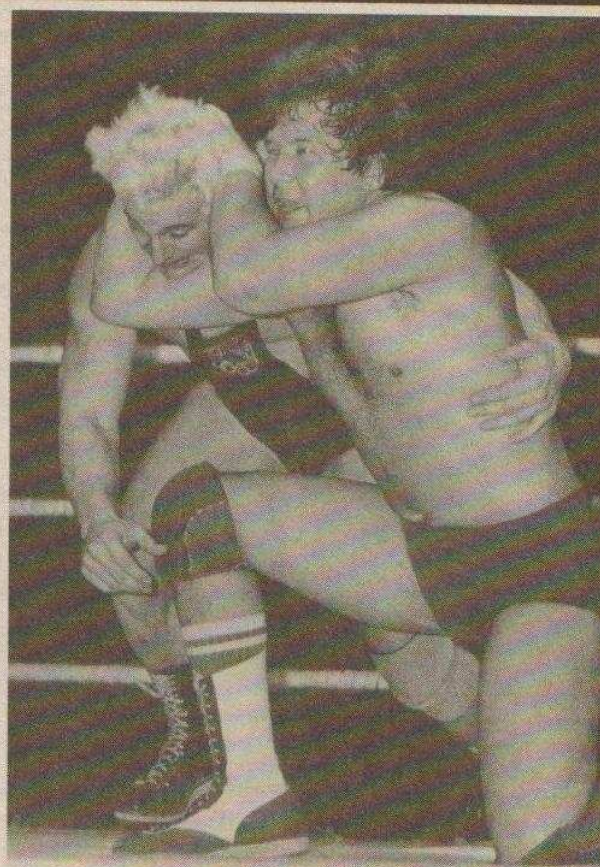


against accepting Slaughter's challenge, Patterson said, "Would Walter Cronkite attack the Ayatollah Khomeini?"



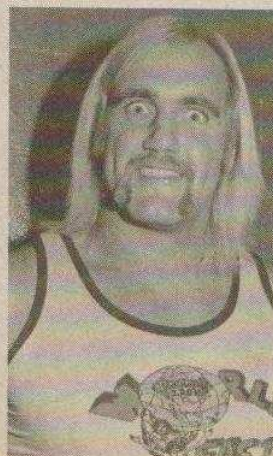
A SPECIAL GIFT FOR A SPECIAL FAN

The January 1981 edition of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* included a special contest: Win a genuine Mil Mascaras mask. Entrants were asked to write an essay where, in 100 words or less, they would explain "what Mil Mascaras stands for." The winner, announced in the April 1981 issue, was Randy Mixon of Columbus, Georgia. His essay said, in part, "Mil Mascaras is synonymous with everything good and decent in life, as well as in wrestling."



THE MILLION-DOLLAR MAN STRIKES AGAIN

Ken Patera claimed he was the victim of a conspiracy. After losing the Missouri heavyweight title to Ted DiBiase and the WWF Intercontinental belt to Pedro Morales, Patera swore that there was a plot against him. "It's a very logical deduction," Patera told *PWL*. "First, DiBiase paid off a referee to count my shoulders down. Then he called his buddy Morales and suggested he buy off a referee, too. They really pulled it off. I guess anything is easy when you have a lot of money behind you."



THE LUCK OF THE DRAW

A benchmark date in the history of "Hulkamania"—and, it would turn out, of professional wrestling as a whole—occurred in July, when a scheduling problem resulted in Hulk Hogan wrestling rulebreakers for the first time since arriving in the AWA. Given a choice between the lesser of two evils, the fans promptly began to cheer Hogan, who had long been one of the most hated individuals in wrestling. From little acorns do mighty Hulksters grow ...

★★★ 19 THE YEAR IN REVIEW 82 ★★★



BEFORE

NEXT TIME, MAYBE HE SHOULD ASK LUCILLE ROBERTS INSTEAD

Dusty Rhodes hired Kevin Sullivan as a nutritionist midway through 1982. Rhodes was serious about getting into even better shape, and Sullivan, at the time, was eager to help. Sullivan soon switched from bodybuilding to bodybusting, however, when he put out a bounty on the bones of rival Barry Windham. Rhodes' plans, needless to say, were abruptly terminated.



AFTER

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THAT?

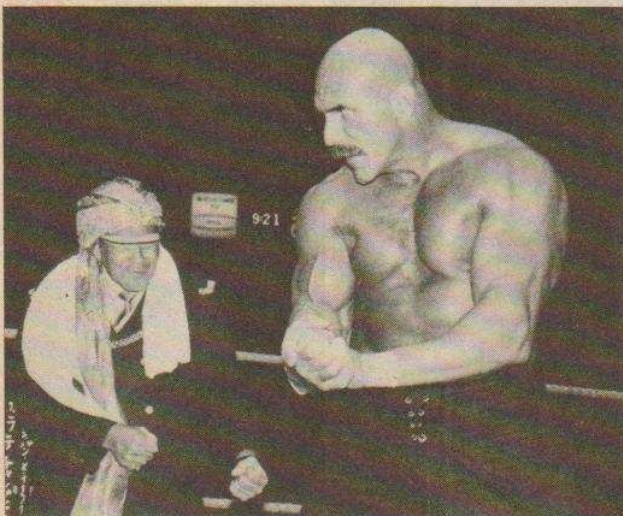
The use of "special referees," like Ivan Putski, came under increasing attacks from the fans over the course of 1982. In virtually every match that utilized a special referee, the official was a noted scientific wrestler.



REPORTS OF MY DEATH WERE GREATLY EXAGGERATED

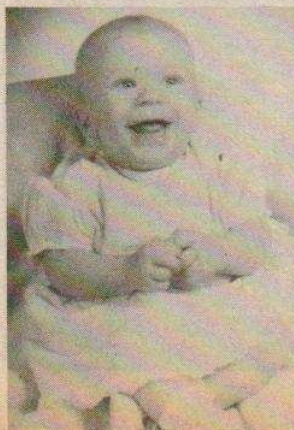
The early months of 1982 were tense months for fans of Superstar Billy Graham. Rumors spread that Graham, who was inactive for several years, had died. Those rumors were proved false when Graham returned to the WWF,

under the tutelage of The Grand Wizard, to exact revenge on Bob Backlund, the man who had taken the WWF championship away from Graham 4½ years earlier. Graham was not only very much alive, but he had adopted a brand-new bald-headed look and a brand-new ring style that emphasized the use of martial arts.



EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT TOMMY RICH... EXCEPT THE FACT THAT HE ONCE WORE A DRESS

Incredible response from wrestling fans everywhere poured into our office as our sister publication *Wrestling Superstars* featured a special section in its Summer 1982 issue on the personal life of Tommy Rich. Baby photos of Wildfire such as this one (when he was a mere spark) were greatly appreciated by his numerous fans.



LOOK OUT BELOW!

Wrestling's first Scaffold Match was held in 1982. The event was held to settle a dispute between Bill Dundee and Koko Ware. Koko Ware fractured his wrist



in that match when he fell to the mat below from the scaffold that was erected 15½ feet above the ring.

THAT'S JOE GARAGIOLA AND VERNE GAGNE... NO, WAIT, IT'S VERNE GAGNE AND JOE... NO, IT'S...

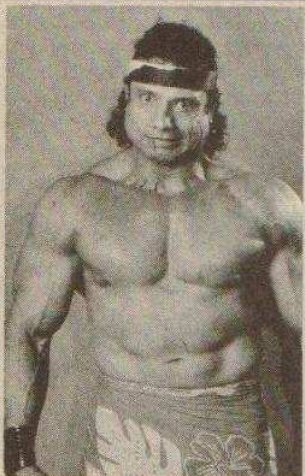


1983

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

THOSE SAMOANS ARE TOUGH, ESPECIALLY THE 12th OR 14th TIME AROUND!

1983 saw an unprecedented wave of criticism directed at WWF champion Bob Backlund, some of it fair, some of it not so fair. Citing the fact that the federation does not allow Backlund to make defenses against other scientific wrestlers, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* withdrew its recognition of the WWF title as a World title, recognizing the AWA and NWA titles as the only true World titles in wrestling. Though he has little say as to whom he wrestles, Backlund, who celebrated his fifth year as champion in February, absorbed the brunt of the fans' and the media's criticism. On a rare trip to Texas, in May, Backlund drew further criticism for defending the WWF title not against such Texas stars as Junkyard Dog, Hacksaw Reed, Kamala, or Hacksaw Duggan, but against Samoan Afa, who was unranked in the WWF's top 10 and who had already received several WWF title shots.



THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN, BUT THEIR COLLECTIVE VOICE GOES UNHEEDED

The May 1983 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* conducted a fan poll on the question: Should Jimmy Snuka be offered another shot at Bob Backlund's WWF title? The July 1983 issue contained the results: An overwhelming 95 percent of the more than 55,000 ballots received said "Yes!" There continues to be a great deal of talk about another Backlund-Snuka confrontation, but the match has yet to be signed.

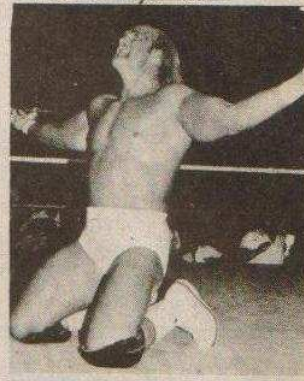
HE PROBABLY JUST DIDN'T WANT TO DISTURB THE SLEEPING HORSES

There was an added contract stipulation when David Von Erich wrestled Jim Garvin for the World Class heavyweight championship: The loser would have to act as the winner's valet for a day. Garvin lost the match and his title, and he and his own valet, Sunshine, served as David's ranchhands for a day. They baled hay, dug holes for a new fence, and washed David's dog. But when it came time to clean the stables, Garvin and Sunshine decided they had had enough and left.



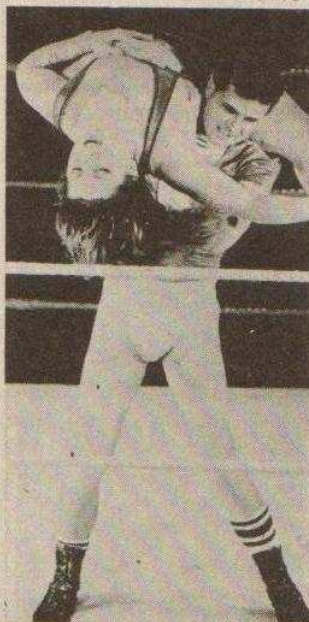
NOW IF THEY COULD ONLY PETITION BOCKWINKEL TO GIVE HOGAN A FAIR SHOT AT THE TITLE

AWA wrestling fans flooded the offices of AWA officials with petitions begging Hulk Hogan to return to the area from his self-imposed exile in Japan. Hogan left the AWA in shame after failing to capture the AWA World title from Nick Bockwinkel, but eventually bowed to the strength of public opinion and returned to the AWA to the cheers of his vast number of loyal fans.



NOW IF DEBORAH HARRY'S PART WAS TAKEN BY ELIZABETH TAYLOR, AND ANDY KAUFMAN WAS REPLACED BY TOMMY TUNE, YOU MIGHT HAVE A HIT ON YOUR HANDS!

Teaneck Tanzi: The Venus Flytrap was the name of a Broadway play about wrestling starring Deborah Harry, lead singer of the rock band Blondie, and Andy Kaufman, formerly Latka Gravas of the television show *Taxi*. The ve-



CONSIDERING WHAT GREG VALENTINE DID TO HIS EAR, HE CAN USE A NURSE!

Annette Vesely, a 23-year-old nurse from Lincoln, Nebraska, won a phone call from Roddy Piper in a special *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* contest in which the participants were asked to write an essay explaining why they would like to speak to the Rowdy Scot. Annette's winning essay described Piper as "someone who is unafraid to preserve his heritage and to have faith in himself, despite others' opinions." During their phone call, Annette admitted to Roddy that she thought he was "kind of cute."



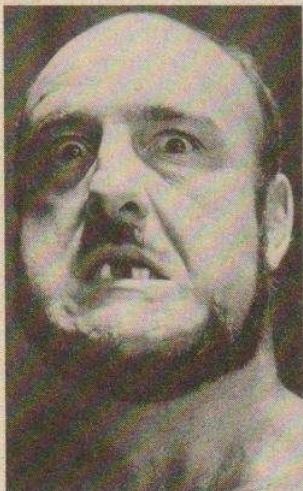
nus flytrap, Tanzi's finishing maneuver, was actually a flying bodypress. The play was a bomb: It closed after only two performances.

1984

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

YOU TRY, BUT IT'S HARD TO BE NICE WHEN YOU'RE GETTING HIT OVER THE HEAD WITH AN UMBRELLA

In the July 1984 issue of *Esquire* magazine, Maurice "Mad Dog" Vachon was the subject of an anecdote told by noted sports artist LeRoy Neiman. In the next month's issue of the magazine for "Man At His Best," Vachon was the subject of a major two-



page "Sports Scenes" article. The highlight of that article was this quote by Vachon regarding wrestling fans: "The worst are the old people. A 75-year-old man cut my brother's throat from ear to ear while he was leaving the ring. An old woman attacked me with an umbrella and cut my head open. You try to be polite, but these people make you rude."



ANY GIVEN TEAM ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT ...

The NWA World tag team title suffered from a remarkable lack of stability in 1984. From the first of the year through to press time for this issue, the title passed among the following teams in the following order: Cowboy Bob Orton & Don Kernodle, Wahoo McDaniel & Mark Youngblood, Jack & Jerry Brisco, Wahoo McDaniel & Mark Youngblood, Ivan Koloff & Don Kernodle, and Dusty Rhodes & Manny Fernandez.



NOW YOU CHEER THEM, NOW YOU DON'T

The following men were fan favorites at one time during 1984, but sometime during the year, for their own particular reasons (in some cases transitory, in others permanent), they decided that rulebreaking was the proper path to success: Chris Adams, Mike Davis, Eddie Gilbert, Chavo Guerrero, Hector Guerrero, Krusher (Darsow) Khru-shev, Wahoo McDaniel (pictured here), Angelo Mosca, Paul Orndorff, Roddy Piper, Billy Robinson, Playboy Buddy Rose, Rick Rude, Buzz Sawyer, Steve Williams, Mr. Wrestling II.



WE KNOW HE PLAYED FOR THE CHICAGO BEARS, BUT DID HE ROOT FOR THE REDSKINS OR THE RAIDERS?

Pro Football Hall of Famer Bronko Nagurski, now age 75, was a man who conquered the wrestling world as easily as he conquered the gridiron. Nagurski was a running back for the Chicago Bears from 1930 to 1937, averaging 4.6 yards per carry. He later held the NWA World title on two occasions, in 1939 and 1941. His first reign began when he defeated Lou Thesz in Houston on June 23, 1939, ending Thesz's second NWA title reign; Ray Steele ended Nagurski's first tenure as champion on March 7, 1940, in St. Louis. Nagurski's second reign came when he regained the belt from Steele on March 11, 1941, in Minneapolis; Sandor Szabo ended that reign on June 5, 1941, in St. Louis. Nagurski had the honor of tossing the coin at the start of Super Bowl XVIII in Tampa, Florida, on January 22. The Los Angeles Raiders, by the way, won the toss and the game.



THE DEVIL MADE HIM DO IT

Kevin Sullivan continued to dominate the Florida wrestling scene throughout 1984. At one time or another during the year, Sullivan's entourage had included The Purple Haze, Buzz Sawyer, Hacksaw Duggan, Superstar Graham, Fallen Angel, Lock, Aug, The Chairman Of The Board, Sir Oliver Humperdink, and several boa constrictor snakes. But the most bizarre manifestation of Sullivan's powerful influence over the people he comes in contact with was when Mike Davis, under Sullivan's spell, was convinced that he was Dusty Rhodes. Davis adopted many of the mannerisms and characteristics of "The American Dream" for several months and, with new confidence, enjoyed more success in the ring than he ever had before.



★ 19 THE YEAR 85 IN REVIEW ★

NUMBERS '85

\$39.95 list price for a videocassette of the WWF's March 31 WrestleMania card, which WWF head Vince McMahon said wouldn't be shown on broadcast television until fans, as WWF announcers claimed, "are old and grey." Within six months, many of the matches from WrestleMania had been seen on broadcast television.

\$100 was the cost of a ringside seat at Madison Square Garden for the WWF's March 31 WrestleMania card (ringside seats in MSG usually cost \$14).



\$400 was the cost of a birthday cake presented to Sgt. Slaughter on August 27 at Northeastern University in Boston in conjunction with a Muscular Dystrophy charity fundraising card of wrestling. The cake measured four feet by six feet, weighed 200 pounds, and was baked by Montilio's Bakery in Quincy, Massachusetts.

\$866.15 is how much it would cost you to purchase one each of every merchandising item offered in the WWF's eight-page 1985 "Season's Greetings Catalog."

\$1,000 offered to Ric Flair by Magnum T.A., payable only if Flair beat T.A. in 10 minutes or less on WTBS' *World Championship Wrestling*. Flair accepted and failed to defeat him in the time limit.

\$1,182 is your cost if you wish to order every back issue of every wrestling magazine available in this issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* that you hold in your hands.

\$1,500 value of the hand-tailored suit offered to Magnum T.A. by Ric Flair. T.A. ripped the suit to shreds on WTBS' *World Championship Wrestling*.

\$3,000 fine and a three-month suspension levied by the New York State Athletic Commission against "Dr. D" David Shultz for boxing the ears of ABC reporter John Stossel.

\$3,000 in damages sustained by a WTBS camera when Ole Anderson took a swipe at it following a dressing room attack in which Ole and Arn Anderson ambushed Magnum T.A.

\$5,000 fine on Terry Funk for attacking ring attendant Mel Phillips.

\$5,000 prize offered for a series of benchpress challenges between Billy Jack Haynes and Hercules Hernandez; Hernandez skipped Florida shortly after the challenge was issued.

\$10,000 in extra training money given to Jim Cornette by his mother in the hopes of finding a new way for The Midnight Express to win the World Class tag team belts from The Fantastics.

\$10,000 offered to The Nightmare and his manager Eddie Gilbert by Ric Flair if they could wrest the North American title away from Terry Taylor, knocking him out of position for an NWA title match. They were successful.

\$10,000 bounty placed on each of the following: Dusty Rhodes, Rick Steamboat, and Manny Fernandez. J.J. Dillon placed the bounty as the result of the three men ripping away Dillon's suit to reveal women's underwear.

\$15,000 in cash thrown to the ringside audience at WrestleMania in Madison Square Garden when Andre the Giant body-slammed Big John Studd and grabbed the money-containing satchel carried by Bobby Heenan.

\$20,000 bounty placed on Wahoo McDaniel by Ric Flair.

\$50,000 bounty on "Mr. Wonderful" Paul Orndorff, placed by Bobby "The Brain" Heenan and upped from \$25,000 earlier in the year.

\$50,000 won by Rick Steamboat and Jimmy Snuka in a Philadelphia tag team battle royal.

\$50,000 won by Debbie Combs in an all-women battle royal in New Jersey's Brendan Byrne Meadowlands Arena.

\$50,000 won by Hulk Hogan and his partner, Hillbilly Jim, in a tag team battle royal in Landover, Maryland.

\$100,000 offered to Gary Hart by the editors of *The Wrestler* if he could put an end to the Chris Adams-Kevin Von Erich feud. Hart laughed at the offer.

\$100,000 in life insurance per wrestler required by the New York State Athletic Commission, to be provided by New York wrestling promoters, effective September 1.

\$100,000 received by Sgt. Slaughter when he singlehandedly won the 12-team tag team challenge at the "Star Wars '85" Pro Wrestling U.S.A. card February 24 in New Jersey's Meadowlands.

\$100,000 won by the team of Kerry, Kevin, and Mike Von Erich plus Michael Hayes, Terry Gordy, and Buddy Roberts in a best-of-five-falls match in Texas Stadium May 5; they defeated the six-man combination of Chris Adams, Gino Hernandez, Steve Williams, Kamala, One Man Gang, and Rip Oliver to win the money.

\$102,987 in estimated refunds given to angry Pittsburgh fans who went to see the March 31 WrestleMania card on closed-circuit television and were greeted with a blank screen.

\$376,614 in tax dollars collected as the result of professional wrestling by New York State in fiscal year 1985.

\$18,600,000 in damages sought by Kevin Wilson, a St. Louis wrestling fan who contended that Kamala punched him in the face and knocked him backward over a row of seats.

★ 19 THE YEAR 86 IN REVIEW ★

QUOTABLES '86



"The old Adrian Adonis had black hair, and he used to wear a black leather jacket and black tights into the ring. Now the Adorable Adrian Adonis has blond hair with pastel bows in it, and he wears pink tights. That's my influence!"

—Jimmy Hart, manager of Adorable Adrian Adonis, speaking in *The Chicago Sun-Times* about how his rock 'n' roll fashion sense affects the men he manages

"I would wrestle Hulk Hogan when I'm 50 years old. Hulk Hogan is a good entertainer. He's a good guitar player. I wouldn't tell you that I can play the guitar better than he does. I wouldn't tell you that I can entertain you better than he does. But I will tell you that I wrestle better than he does."

—Former WWF champion Bob Backlund, on his continuing campaign to secure a match against current WWF kingpin Hulk Hogan

"The fan has and always will be our main consideration. One of the many things I learned from my father was that it's better to develop a good relationship with your customers than to squeeze them for every penny."

—NWA Promoter Jim Crockett, interviewed in the April 1986 *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*



"I always knew I was gonna be different. I always knew I was gonna do something different with my life—I just felt that I gotta do something weird. I can't handle a 9 to 5 job, exaaaactly."

—Hillbilly Jim, interviewed in *The Toronto Sun* about his choice of career



"I visualize the tumor as a devil and I visualize the radiation coming in there as a big lightning bolt and just knocking the hell out of it. [John Wayne and Yul Brynner] set the role model. They fought it to the end, and, you know, I can't do any less than that."

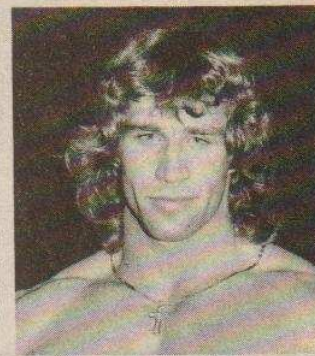
—Long Rider Scott Irwin, on his current battle against a cancerous brain tumor

"Wade Boggs likes chicken, but he doesn't bring one to the plate when he comes to bat."

—Television interviewer Larry King questioning WWF head Vince McMahon about why Jake Roberts brings a snake to the ring

"Everybody thinks the federation is in it just for the money. It's not so. They are concerned for the kids of this country. This is what separates the WWF from others, they have concern and show it."

—Ernie Ladd, at the Foxboro, Massachusetts, WWF "King of the Ring" tournament, speaking about his position as WWF goodwill ambassador



"I want to get out and wrestle tomorrow night."

—Kerry Von Erich, speaking from his hospital bed just days after the June motorcycle accident that kept him out of the ring for the rest of 1986

"Hulk Hogan couldn't last five minutes in a Mid-South match!"

—UWF (formerly Mid-South) President Bill Watts, interviewed in the April 1986 edition of *Inside Wrestling*

AS A NATION MOURNS, THE TRUE WRESTLING FAN WONDERS: WHAT WILL LORD AL HAYS DO WITH ALL OF HIS CHEESY TUXEDOS NOW?

Wrestling TNT, the widely criticized WWF "talk show" broadcast on USA cable network, was canceled at the end of the summer. Earlier in the year, Gene Okerlund had replaced Vince McMahon as host; Lord Al Hays remained co-host. Many reasons were given for the axing, including: (1) low ratings, (2) an unwillingness by the WWF to produce any more shows, (3) the inability of WWF head Vince McMahon to give the program the proper creative attention, and (4) ratings aside, USA Network simply got tired of the show. Varying levels of validity have been attributed to each reason, and, like many things surrounding the WWF, the truth will probably never be known.



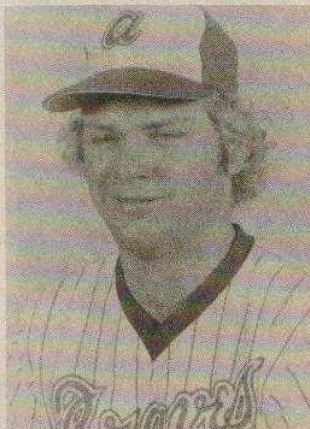
★ 19 THE YEAR 87 IN REVIEW 87 ★

BLUE CHIPS FOR DROPKICKS

1987 marked the first year that a wrestling promotion went public—financially, that is. A group of Florida investors announced plans for an initial offering of 7 million shares of stock in the Global Wrestling Alliance, an ambitious promotion that, according to head promoter Pat Schaefer, would promote “entertainment-oriented” wrestling shows around the globe. At the initial projected price of 40 cents a share, the offering would raise \$2.8 million to launch the enterprise, tentatively scheduled to debut in late September or early October.

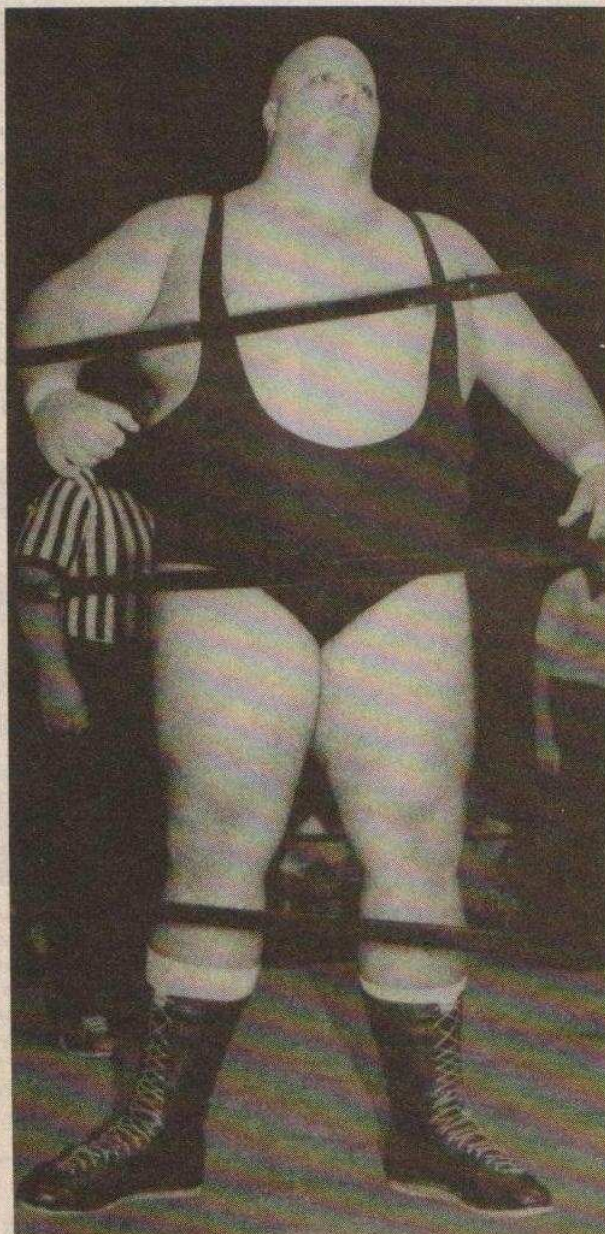
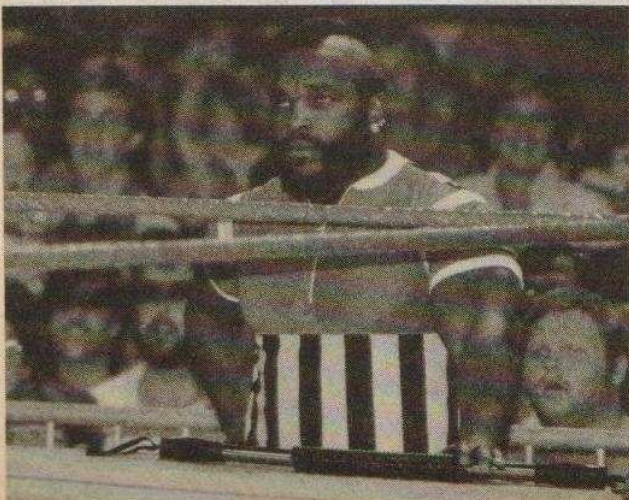
BO JACKSON WOULD HAVE JUMPED AT THE OFFER!

In May, the former Atlanta Braves’ star first baseman Bob Horner declined an offer from Jim Crockett Promotions to play for sister Frances’ Double-A team in Charlotte, North Carolina. The offer also would have had Horner being guided into the world of professional wrestling. Horner instead elected to play baseball in Japan. To date, there has been no word on whether he has been in touch with any Japanese wrestling promoters.



MR. T: A REFEREE TO BE COUNTED ON?

In an attempt to restore the tarnished reputation of its referees in the wake of the Danny Davis scandal, the WWF has lured Mr. T from his Hollywood pursuits to serve as “enforcer” in crucial title matches. T’s first big test came in a July 31 match during which The Honky Tonk Man defended his Intercontinental title against “Macho Man” Randy Savage in St. Louis. Savage won the match via countout, but the fans in the Kiel Auditorium counted to 12 before T reached 10 and awarded Savage the victory (but not the title). Maybe T and Davis had the same math teacher!



IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD

“We are not amused,” was the message sent out by the WWF last spring after an uncannily accurate *Mad* magazine parody cover of that promotion’s monthly magazine hit newsstands in April. Seems that the *Mad* send-up was so realistic, the folks at the WWF feared that their readers might be duped into buying the parody and not realize their mistake until they opened the publication to discover *Mad*. The cover parody promised such articles as: “King Kong Bundy: Cellulite Is My Secret Weapon!” and “Exclusive Interviews With Jake ‘The Snake’s’ Python And Kamala’s Stomach.”

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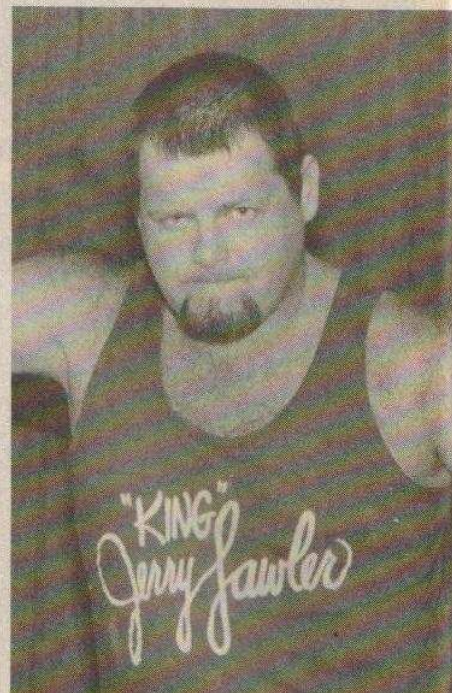
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RINGSIDE

(Continued from page 10)



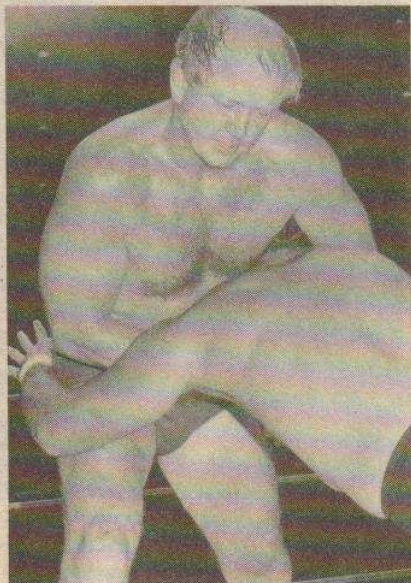
Jerry Lawler lost the AWA Southern title in a tag team match pitting him and Rocky Johnson against Don Bass and Brickhouse Brown. Lawler thought the referee, Big Bubba, would be impartial, but Bubba caused him to lose.

wanted the other team to put up in the match. If Lawler lost, he would lose the AWA Southern title. If Rocky Johnson lost, he would have his head shaved. If Bass lost, he would also get his head shaved, and if Brown lost, he would throw \$5,000 to the crowd. To choose the referees, the two teams played a wrestling trivia game. Lawler and Johnson won and chose **Big Bubba** as the referee.

In the match two days later, Lawler slammed Bass, climbed the ropes, and knocked out Bass with a fistdrop. Lawler pressed him, but then Bubba looked at Johnson and Brown and winked at Brickhouse. Shockingly, Bubba pushed Lawler off Bass and legdropped him. Bass covered Lawler for the pin and Bubba made the count. Lawler lost the belt and Brickhouse shocked the crowd when he took the \$5,000 and gave it to Bubba. Bass, according to the contract stipulation, is the new AWA Southern champion.

In the World Class area, WCCW tag team champions **Eric Embry** and **Frankie "The Thumper" Lancaster** have their hands full with a challenge from **Steve** and **Shawn Simpson**. But one contending team is leaving the area: **The RPMs** are headed for Memphis and should be there by the end of August.

Controversy in the Florida area! **Dory Funk Jr.** stole the Florida heavyweight belt from champion



Dory Funk applies a front chancery on Mike Rotundo. The Funk-Rotundo feud heated up when Funk stole Rotundo's Florida title belt. The NWA has ordered him to give it back.

Mike Rotundo and the NWA has ordered him to give it back. Meanwhile, **Terry Funk** returned to the Sunshine State to help his brother run Rotundo out of the sport. "Rotundo doesn't even deserve to live," said Terry.

The Funks are also after **Kevin Sullivan**, who is begging **Dusty Rhodes** for help. Sullivan appeared on an interview with half his face painted black, meaning that if he does not get help soon he will turn bad again. Sullivan could do little to help his partner **Blackjack Mulligan** in a match against Florida tag champs **The Shepherders**. **Butch Miller** and **Luke Williams** put **Blackjack Mulligan** out of commission with a back injury after Sullivan was triple-teamed by the Sheeps and

(Continued on page 80)

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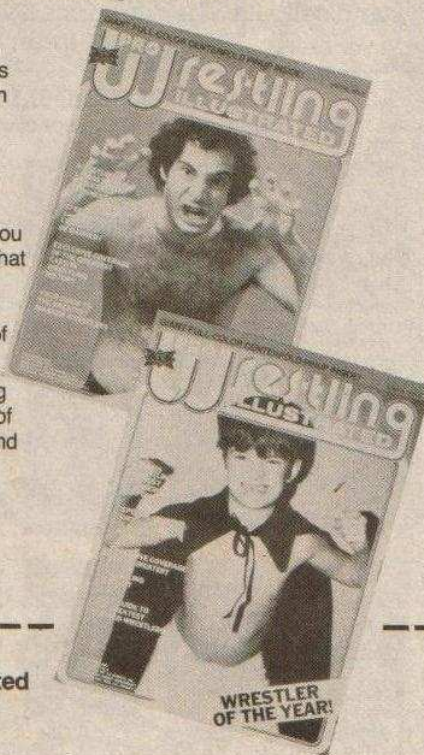
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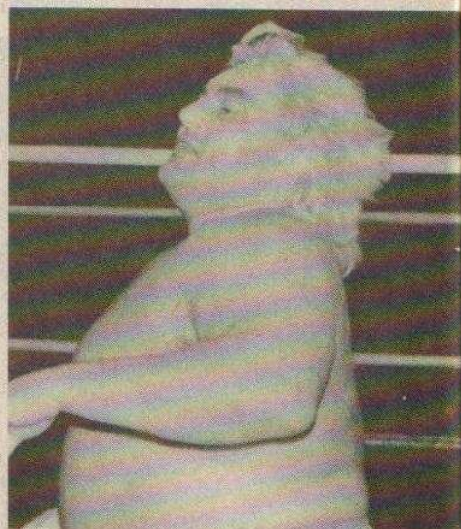
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RINGSIDE

(Continued from page 79)

flagbearer **Johnny Ace**.

Doug Furnas won the newly formed Tennessee title on August 5 in Knoxville when he defeated **Tony Anthony** in the tournament final . . . **The Bullet** is feuding with **Dutch Mantel** . . . **Mr. T** refereed a match between **Randy Savage** and Inter-



Adrian Adonis has come to the AWA, where he is being managed by Paul E. Dangerously. Despite a change of address and a new manager, Adonis has not changed his unique style.

continental champion **The Honky Tonk Man** and was involved in some controversy. Mr. T counted out Honky Tonk at the 12-count when he was supposed to stop the match at the 10-count.

Where's **Adrian Adonis**? He's back in the AWA and under the management of **Paul E. Dangerously**, who is quickly building up quite a stable of wrestlers. Adonis and **Jesse Ventura** were tag team partners in the AWA several years ago, but the Adonis that fans are seeing now is much different from the AWA Adrian of old. He weighs in at a hefty 330 pounds and sports shocking pink hair. Adonis defeated several preliminary wrestlers upon his return and Dangerously is trying to get him a series of matches against the top contenders for **Curt Hennig's** AWA World championship.

That's all for now. See you at the matches. □

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SPORTS REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

(Continued from page 25)

Apter, Randy Gordon, Matt Brock, Gary Morgenstein, Steve Farhood, and Dan Shocket. Only Apter and Brock still remain. We lost Dan to cancer two years ago, but his influence is still felt at *PWI*. He was one of the most important developers of this magazine. Gordon is a boxing commentator for Madison Square Garden Network. Morgenstein has had two books published. Farhood is a freelance writer and writes a monthly column for our sister boxing magazine *KO*. King recently left *PWI* and its sister publications to explore other areas of publishing.

Between that first issue and this 100th issue, staff members, such as Joe Bua, Chaz Fenn, and Jim Schuermann, have come and gone. Others have joined the staff over the years and remain today: Craig Peters and Stu Saks, for example. And recently, new names have graced the staff box, such as Dave Rosenbaum and Andy Rodriguez. But while the staff might be different, the objective is still the same as laid out by King in issue number one:

"Every month, aided by numerous photographers and correspondents, this uniquely talented staff will bring you the world of professional wrestling."

The dedication and enthusiasm we put into this magazine has not changed, although the sport certainly has. It's bigger, better, and draws more fans than ever before.

So we're having a party and you're all invited. We're celebrating with this 100th issue of *PWI* that you're holding in your hands, perhaps the most impressive issue we've ever published. It's 100 pages, chock full of information, trivia, great events, outstanding writing, memories, history, and, of course, the greatest wrestling photography in the world. It's the culmination of 100 issues of effort, a tribute to *PWI*, to our readers, and to the great sport we all enjoy.

"The 10 Greatest Events Of The *PWI* Years" is a look at those

events that changed wrestling over the past eight years. Many of these events you'll still remember; others mean as much now as they did then.

"The 10 Most Influential Wrestlers Of The PWI Years" is a fascinating section containing notes and quotes about the true superstars of the game. These two sections alone make this issue a keeper.

"The First 100 Issues: A Special Fan Poll" presents the results of a poll that appeared in Craig Peters' October 1987 "In Focus" column. We're sure you'll want to see how you voted.

"The Unofficial-Official Awards of the PWI Years" is a special section written by you, our readers. These awards are a result of your imagination and knowledge of the sport.

"The PWI Achievement Awards: A Retrospective" includes the winners of these annual awards dating back to 1972. They were first presented in PWI in 1981, where they have since gained worldwide attention.

You'll have a chance to win a lifetime subscription to PWI in our special contest, and we provide you with a once-in-a-lifetime look at the production of PWI in a special behind-the-scenes look at the PWI offices.

There's more color than ever before in this special issue and, of course, there's the usual monthly columns, ratings, and "Ratings Analysis," all combining to make this issue of PWI one you'll want to save for years to come. We've put a lot of work into this issue, but we think it's worth it.

And we pledge to put the same effort into the next 100 issues of PWI. As we keep growing and improving, your opinions and comments are vital. Because without your input, this magazine will die. You are what wrestling is all about. You're what this 100th issue is all about.

As Peter King said, "This issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, as well as all succeeding issues, belongs to you, the wrestling fan."

Enjoy!



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The year-end issues of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* are always the most anticipated wrestling magazines of the year. And the 1985 and 1986 issues were the best ones we ever published. Each is more than 90 pages, and contains the year-end features *PWI* readers have come to expect. We have limited supplies of these newsstand sell-outs, so don't be disappointed twice. Order your copies today. Only \$5.00 each.

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BETWEEN FALLS

(Continued from page 8)

abuse of Bam Bam Bigelow.

Now McMahon has reached a new low by bringing in Mr. T as a troubleshooting referee. What's next? Is the faltering Cyndi Lauper behind him?

Bad move, McMahon. The World Wrestling Fraud will lose many customers. I will be one of them.

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Baltimore

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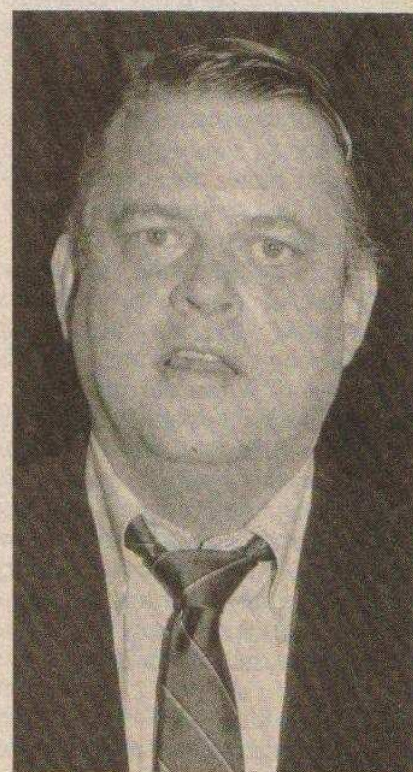
An article in the October 1987 *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* concluded that Vince McMahon and Jim Crockett will never take complete control of professional wrestling ("NWA & WWF Gain Momentum: Is Wrestling Headed Toward A Two-Party System?"). I disagree with this conclusion.

McMahon has proven that he is above nothing in his quest to bring about global supremacy of the

WWF. This includes driving competition such as Southwest Championship Wrestling and Georgia Championship Wrestling out of business. Crockett has shown lately that he is no better by developing close relationships and gaining some measure of control over the UWF and Florida areas. Both promoters collect wrestlers the way other people collect stamps and coins, then do not allow these wrestlers to circulate freely among other promoters, thus severely depleting the competition's talent rosters.

Something must be done to stop these two from establishing a monopoly. Maybe the solution is for them to go head to head and drive each other out of business. Then maybe the parity that ruled professional wrestling for many years will return.

CHRIS SHERLOCK
Monroe, GA □



WWF promoter Vince McMahon (above left) and the NWA's Jim Crockett (above right) threaten to monopolize the sport, writes Chris Sherlock, who thinks this would be bad for wrestling.

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NO HOLDS BARRED

(Continued from page 18)

obvious that Brock was born with his unique perceptions, his incredible understanding of the game and the people involved with professional wrestling. Make no mistake about it: Matt Brock is *not*, by any means, a great writer. For style and grammar, Brock might have a hard time passing even the most basic journalism course. But he knows what he's talking about and gets his message across better than any other wrestling writer. Isn't that what journalism is all about?

This is only brought up because I noticed that Senior Editor Bill Apter was chosen the best writer of the *PWI* years by you readers. Let me just say that while Bill is a fine writer and has a vast knowledge of the sport, he's a clear second to Matt Brock. I'm disappointed by the vote results. Matt Brock is a legend, the greatest wrestling writer who ever lived. In this poll, you treated him like he doesn't even exist. For shame!

Matt not winning Best Writer of the *PWI* Years makes it easier for me to accept finishing second to Eddie Ellner in the Worst Writer of the *PWI* Years category. At first, I took this as a major insult. But it has become painfully obvious that the poll results were based more on the writers' opinions than on his or her writing skills. Ellner is controversial and takes an opposing viewpoint, to be sure, but nobody could ever accuse him of being a bad writer.

This reminds me of the reviews of the 1986 Academy Award winner for Best Motion Picture, *Platoon*. For the most part, this movie was judged by the critics and members of the Academy solely on the message it contained, that war is bad, those who run wars are worse, and the Vietnam War

should have never happened, while totally ignoring the quality of *Platoon* as a motion picture. It's message was fine, but *Platoon* stunk.

Ellner doesn't need anybody to defend him. He can do that on his own. But it's clear that he's being judged on the content of his columns, not the quality. Political commentator George Will is one of the greatest columnists in the world. I totally disagree with his ideas, but his syndicated newspaper column is outstanding, always interesting, always well thought out, always well written. Ellner is no George Will, but his columns are always entertaining. He's probably the most widely read columnist in *PWI*, so how can you vote him the worst writer?

As for myself, I suspect that a preoccupation with wrestling as a betting sport was the main reason for my high placing in the poll. In fact, for some time it looked like I might outdistance Ellner in the poll. This can be taken one of two ways. I can be distraught, because my readers think I stink, or I can be happy because a large number of votes means a large number of readers. For ego's sake, I'll go with the latter reason.

I also suspect that I've been identified as a rulebreakers' columnist, much like Eddie Ellner. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have absolutely no regard for the men who break the rules of wrestling to achieve their goals. As a pure wrestler, Ric Flair is outstanding. But he often goes beyond the bounds of decency, both in the ring and on his TV interviews. That I abhor. Besides, it's not really the wrestlers themselves I'm interested in. I'm more fascinated by fans.

I've said it before, I'll say it again. You're an amazing bunch. □

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WRESTLING 84-86

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FROM THE DESK OF (Continued from page 12)



Gary Morgenstein was one of the driving forces behind *PWI* in its early days.

succeed.

I devoted my entire column to Peter King in the September 1987 issue after his departure from *PWI* left me editor-in-chief. I have spoken to him several times since, and I can tell that he has never been happier. He accomplished his goals at *PWI*, and one of the goals was to put us in a position where we could prosper without him. Peter was the heart and soul of this magazine for 7½ years and this celebration would not be complete without us saluting his devotion to his staff, readers, and the sport we all love so much.

Lastly, I salute the man fans loved to hate for his entire career as a wrestling journalist. I am speaking of Dan Shocket, with whom I constantly argued yet deeply respected until his death from cancer in 1985. Dan certainly wasn't the kind of man who would get excited over the 100th issue of a magazine. If he were alive today, you could be sure you would have read a story condemning its self-serving nature. But deep down inside, he would have been proud of what we've accomplished. Dan, for all the controversy he stirred, was a humane, decent man. And I'm proud to have known him and worked with him.

All four of these individuals left an indelible mark on the history of

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Pro Wrestling Illustrated. Each provided not only their own journalistic excellence, but also their influence on the individuals who are currently working here. I feel a lot better about this issue now that they have been given their proper recognition.

As I write the last words of this column, the 100th issue is becoming a part of history, and I'm glad. You can dwell on past accomplishments for only so long until you start to get swellheaded and a bit cocky. The challenge confronting us now is to further solidify our position for the next hundred issues.

I'm up for the challenge, and I know my co-workers are, too. There's an attitude here that won't allow us to settle for second-best. It's something that we learned from Gary Morgenstein, Joseph Bua, Peter King, and Dan Shocket. They won't be with us for the second hundred issues, but their presence will forever be felt. ☐

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For the past two years, the September cover-dated "SuperCards" editions of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* have set new standards for wrestling journalism. Bonus pages, special 12-page color sections, and peerless analysis of the annual spring "SuperCards" make the September editions of *PWI* true collectors' items. We have limited supplies of these newsstand sellouts, and they're sure to go fast. Only \$5.00 each. Order today!

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OFF THE TOP ROPE

(Continued from page 20)

Dear Eddie,

Here is my entry for the "Giant Idiot" contest: Imagine a wrestler with the mind of George Steele, the mouth of Ric Flair (because he never shuts up), the face of Capt. Lou Albano, the stomach and chest of Abdullah the Butcher, the right arm of Sam Houston, the left arm of Hulk Hogan, and the legs of Little Beaver. I hope you like him.

STEVE BURNETTE
Santa Ana, CA

Dear Steve,

The legs of Little Beaver! Brilliant!

Dear Mr. Ellner,

Ode to Andre:

Since no one can compare,
to try would be unfair.
So by combining features,
we may match up these creatures.
We'll start with skinny arms
which could cause no real harm,

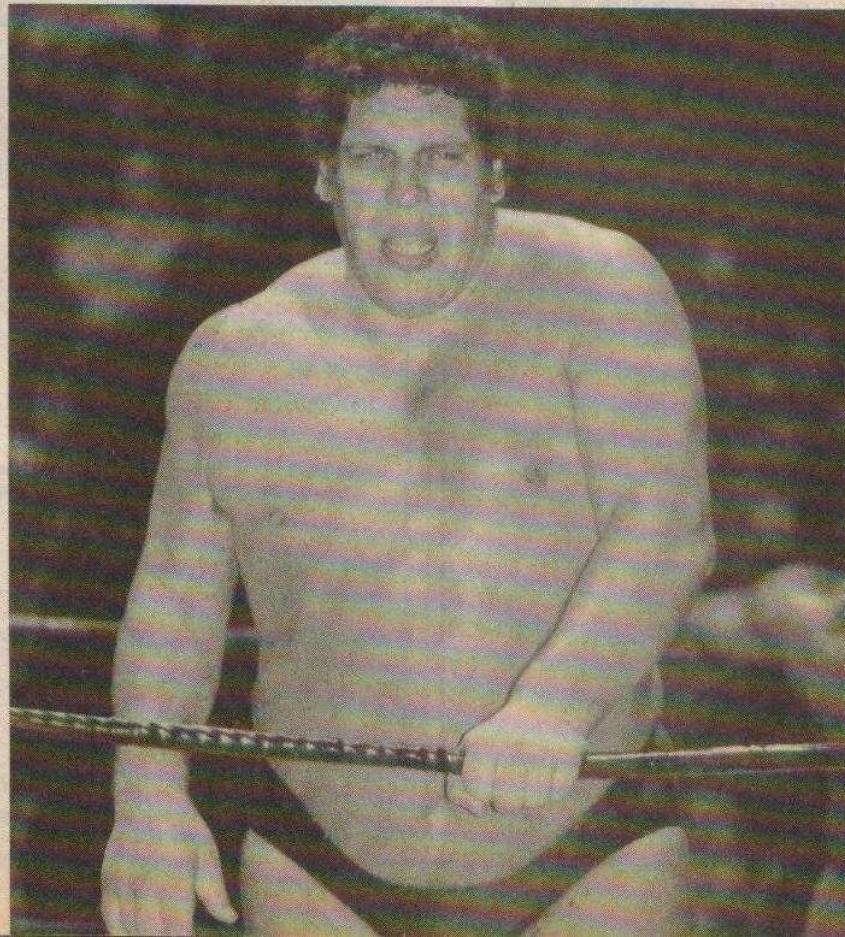
since they cannot be bulky,
Kendall Windham or a Mulkey.
To rate stupidity,
no human speaks as he.
To make as dumb a goon,
brains of Gorilla Monsoon.
To make as gross a face,
requires sub-human race.
His looks could scour the sink:
Who else? The Missing Link.
He has no wrestling skills,
providing little thrills.
Maneuvers? Who knows less?
The Rock 'n' Roll Express.
The beast is almost done,
But does he weigh a ton?
To make as large a bust:
That's right, your friend Big Dust.

SCOTT BABAKAIAFF
Surrey, BC

Dear Scott,

This could be a winner. Tune in next month. ☐

My "Giant Idiot" contest is drawing to a close. Although I have several promising entries, none can compare with ol' Andre the Giant himself.





This special feature is for all fans who want to know who won and who lost . . . and how. *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* will print eyewitness reports from correspondents who attend the matches. If you'd like to have your correspondent report printed in the world's largest-selling wrestling magazine, send it to: **Arena Report; PWI, Box 48; Rockville Centre, NY 11571.**

In keeping with the theme of this 100th edition of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, "Arena Report" takes a historical look at some of the most significant cards of wrestling during the *PWI* years. In most cases, the main event results are very well known, but some of the undercard results will surprise you. Indeed, this month's "Arena Report" is a wonderful stroll down wrestling's memory lane.

SHOWDOWN AT SHEA STADIUM: (Flushing, NY; August 9, 1980): Bruno Sammartino defeated Larry Zbyszko in a steel cage match . . . Andre the Giant scored a controversial pin over Hulk Hogan . . . Bob Backlund & Pedro Morales defeated The Wild Samoans to capture the WWF tag team title . . . Ken Patera retained his Intercontinental title despite losing to Tony Atlas via countout . . . Ivan Putski hammered his way to victory over Johnny Rodz . . . Antonio Inoki bearhugged Larry Sharpe into submission . . . Tatsumi Fujinami successfully defended his WWF junior heavyweight title against Chavo Guerrero . . . Pat Patterson downed Tor Kamata . . . Greg Gagne beat Rick McGraw in a scientific match . . . Dominic DeNucci downed Baron Mikel Scicluna.

STARRCADE '83: (Greensboro, NC; November 24, 1983): Ric Flair regained the NWA title from Harley Race . . . Rick Steamboat & Jay Youngblood recaptured the NWA World tag team title from Jack & Jerry Brisco . . . Roddy Piper defeated U.S. champion Greg Valentine in a non-title dog collar chain match . . . Wahoo McDaniel & Mark Youngblood fell to Dick Slater & Cowboy Bob Orton . . . Charlie Brown beat The Great Kabuki . . . The Assassins won a controversial decision over Rufus R. Jones & Buggy McGraw . . . Carlos Colon beat Abdullah the Butcher via DQ . . . Johnny Weaver & Scott McGhee defeated Kevin Sullivan & Mark "The Purple Haze" Lewin via disqualification.

DAVID VON ERICH MEMORIAL PARADE OF CHAMPIONS: (Irving, TX; May 6, 1984): Kerry Von Erich defeated Ric Flair to capture the NWA World title . . . Kevin, Mike, & Fritz Von Erich defeated The Fabulous Freebirds to capture the World Class six-man title . . . Iceman King Parsons & Buck Zumhofe captured the World Class American tag team title from The Super Destroyers . . . Kamala and The Great Kabuki battled to a draw . . . Hacksaw Butch Reed pinned Chick Donovan . . . The Missing Link defeated Junkyard Dog but was subse-

quently disqualified after the bell . . . Chris Adams & Sunshine defeated Jim Garvin & Precious in a mixed tag team match.

A NIGHT OF CHAMPIONS AT THE MEADOWLANDS: (East Rutherford, NJ; May 29, 1984): Ric Flair retained his NWA World title with a victory over Rick Steamboat . . . Ronnie Garvin defeated Jake "The Snake" Roberts to keep his National TV title . . . Don Kernodle & Ivan Koloff successfully defended their NWA World tag team belts against Pez Whatley & Mark Youngblood . . . King Kong Bundy & Jim Valiant were defeated by National tag team champions The Road Warriors . . . Les Thornton retained his NWA junior heavyweight championship against El Gran Apollo . . . Carlos Colon pinned Tully Blanchard . . . Dusty Rhodes beat The Masked Assassin . . . The Great Kabuki downed The Invader.

STARRCADE '84: (Greensboro, NC; November 22, 1984): Ric Flair retained his NWA World title against Dusty Rhodes when referee Smokin' Joe Frazier stopped the bout due to Dusty's bleeding . . . Tully Blanchard beat Rick Steamboat . . . Wahoo McDaniel pinned Superstar Billy Graham to keep his U.S. title . . . Ivan & Nikita Koloff beat Ole Anderson & Keith Larsen when Ivan pinned Larsen . . . Paul Jones defeated Jimmy Valiant in a loser-leave-town match . . . Dick Slater failed to take Ron Bass' Mid-Atlantic heavyweight title when Slater threw referee Sonny Fargo out of the ring . . . Manny Fernandez beat Black Bart . . . Buzz Tyler & The Assassin derailed The Zambie Express . . . Jesse Barr defeated Mike Graham in a superb scientific match . . . Brian Adias used his airplane spin to pin Mr. Ito.

WRESTLEMANIA: (New York, NY; March 31, 1985): Hulk Hogan and Mr. T defeated Roddy Piper and Paul Orndorff when Hogan pinned Orndorff . . . Wendi Richter (with rock star Cyndi Lauper in her corner) defeated Lelani Kai (with The Fabulous Moolah in her corner) to win the WWF women's title . . . Andre the Giant collected a \$15,000 prize for bodyslamming Big John Studd . . . Mike Rotundo & Barry Windham lost the WWF tag team title to Iron Sheik & Nikolai Volkoff . . . Greg Valentine retained his Intercontinental title against Junkyard Dog via disqualification . . . Tito Santana defeated The Executioner . . . King Kong Bundy pinned S.D. Jones in nine seconds . . . Rick Steamboat pinned Matt Borne . . . David Sammartino and Bru-



tus Beefcake were both disqualified after interference by Bruno Sammartino and Johnny Valiant.

STARRCADE '85: (Greensboro, NC; November 28, 1985): **Magnum T.A.** destroyed **Tully Blanchard** in an "I quit" steel cage match ... **The Rock 'n' Roll Express** defeated **Ivan & Nikita Koloff** to regain the NWA World tag team title ... **Buddy Landell** captured the National heavyweight title from **Terry Taylor** ... **Krusher Khrushchev** beat **Sam Houston** to capture the Mid-Atlantic title ... **Black Bart** beat **Ron Bass** in a bullrope match ... **Don Kernodle** pinned **Tommy Lane** ... **Denny Brown** kept his NWA junior heavyweight championship from **Rocky King**.

STARRCADE '85: (Atlanta): **Ric Flair** retained his NWA World title, despite being pinned by **Dusty Rhodes**, when referee **Tommy Young** and NWA President **Bob Geigel** ruled that Flair should have been disqualified before the pinfall for outside interference by **Arn Anderson** ... **Arn & Ole Anderson** beat **Wahoo McDaniel & Billy Jack Haynes** ... **Manny Fernandez** beat **Abdullah the Butcher** ... **Superstar Graham** defeated **Konga the Barbarian** via disqualification ... **Jimmy Valiant & Miss Atlanta Lively** downed **The Midnight Express** ... **Pistol Pez Whatley** pinned **Mike Davis** ... **Thunderfoot I** scored a victory over **The Italian Stallion**.

WRESTLEMANIA 2: (Uniondale, NY; April 7, 1986): **Paul Orndorff** and **Magnificent Muraco** battled to a double-countout ... **Randy Savage** defeated **George "The Animal" Steele** ... **Jake Roberts** pinned **George Wells** ... **Mr. T** won his boxing match against **Roddy Piper** when Piper was disqualified in round four for shoving referee **Jack Lotz** and bodyslamming T.

WRESTLEMANIA 2: (Chicago): **Fabulous Moolah** retained her WWF women's title by defeating **Velvet McIntyre** ... **Cpl. Kirchner** pinned **Nikolai Volkoff** ... In a battle royal that included top NFL and WWF stars, **Andre the Giant** triumphed when he threw **Brett Hart** out of the ring. Earlier, **William "The Refrigerator" Perry**, **Russ Francis**, **Jimbo Covert**, **Harvey Martin**, and **Bill Fralic** had been sacked by the grapplers ... **The British Bulldogs** captured the WWF World tag team belts by defeating **Greg Valentine & Brutus Beefcake**.

WRESTLEMANIA 2: (Los Angeles): **Rick Steamboat** pinned **Hercules Hernandez** ... **Adrian Adonis** pinned **Uncle Elmer** ... **Dory & Terry Funk** beat **Junkyard Dog & Tito Santana** when Terry hit JYD from behind with **Jimmy Hart's** megaphone ... **Hulk Hogan** retained his WWF World title by defeating **King Kong Bundy** in a cage match.

WRESTLEROCK (Minneapolis; April 20, 1986): **Stan Hansen** defeated **Nick Bockwinkel** by DQ to retain his AWA World title

... **The Road Warriors** defeated **Michael Hayes & Jim Garvin** in a cage match ... **Jimmy Snuka & Greg Gagne** defeated **Nord the Barbarian & Bruiser Brody** in a cage match ... **Buddy Rose & Doug Somers** defeated **The Midnight Rockers** ... **Harley Race** and **Rick Martel** wrestled to a double-disqualification ... **Barry Windham & Mike Rotundo** beat **The Fabulous Ones** when Rotundo pinned **Stan Lane** ... **Sgt. Slaughter** beat **Kamala** to retain his Americas title when **Gen. Skandor Akbar** interfered ... **Col. DeBeers** won over **Wahoo McDaniel** via DQ ... **Brad Rheingans** beat **Boris Zukhov** ... **Curt Hennig & Scott Hall** beat **The Long Riders** to retain their AWA World tag belts ... **Scott LeDoux** defeated **Larry Zbyszko** via disqualification in a European rules boxing match ... **Tiger Mask** pinned **Buck Zumhofe** ... **Shohei "Giant" Baba** beat **Bulldog Bob Brown** ... **Sherri Martel** won a 10-woman battle royal ... **Little Mr. T & Cowboy Lang** defeated **Lord Littlebrook & Little Tokyo** in a midget tag team match.

STARRCADE '86: (Greensboro, NC; November 27, 1986): **Ric Flair** retained his NWA World title against **Nikita Koloff** via disqualification ... **Tully Blanchard** defeated **Dusty Rhodes** for the NWA TV title ... **The Road Warriors** beat **The Midnight Express** in a scaffold match ... **Big Bubba Rogers** won a Louisville street fight match against **Ronnie Garvin** ... **The Rock 'n' Roll Express** prevailed over **Arn & Ole Anderson** ... **Wahoo McDaniel** defeated **Rick Rude** in a strap match ... **Tim Horner & Nelson Royal** downed **Don & Rocky Kernodle** ... **Brad Armstrong** and **Jim Garvin** battled to a draw ... **Hector Guerrero & Baron Von Raschke** beat **Shaska Whatley & Konga the Barbarian** ... **Ivan Koloff & Krusher Khrushchev** successfully defended their U.S. tag team title against **Dutch Mantell & Bobby Jagers** ... **Sam Houston** retained his Central States title against **Bill Dundee** via DQ.

WRESTLEMANIA III: (Pontiac, MI; March 29, 1987): **Hulk Hogan** pinned **Andre the Giant** ... **Rick Steamboat** captured the Intercontinental title from **Randy Savage** ... **The Iron Sheik & Nikolai Volkoff** defeated **The Killer Bees** via DQ after **Hacksaw Jim Duggan** interfered ... **The Hart Foundation & Danny Davis** beat **The British Bulldogs & Tito Santana** when Davis pinned **Davey Boy Smith** after hitting him with **Jimmy Hart's** megaphone ... **Rick Martel & Tom Zenk** defeated **Cowboy Bob Orton & Magnificent Muraco** ... **Billy Jack Haynes** and **Hercules Hernandez** battled to a double-countout ... **Harley Race** defeated **Junkyard Dog** ... **Greg Valentine & Brutus Beefcake** beat **The Rougeaus** ... **Roddy Piper** defeated **Adrian Adonis** ... **Hillbilly Jim, Haiti Kid, & Little Beaver** beat **King Kong Bundy, Lord Littlebrook, & Little Tokyo** ... **Butch Reed** pinned **Koko B. Ware** ... **The Honky Tonk Man** pinned **Jake "The Snake" Roberts**. □

★★★★★ WRESTLING ★★★★★

ENQUERER

PAUL ORNDORFF TURNS GOOD AGAIN!

Former Heenan Protege Set For Feud With Rick Rude

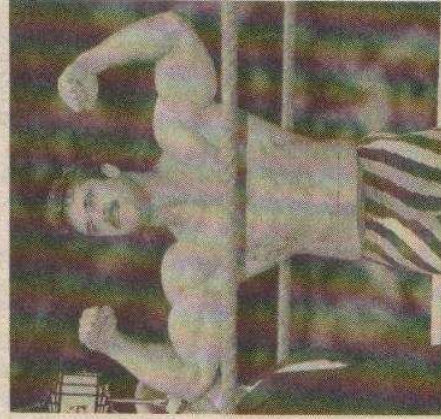
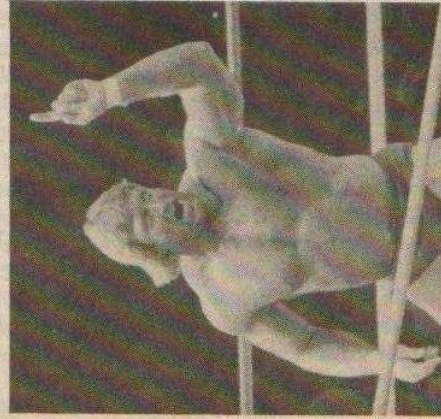
By STU SAKS

MADISON, WI—Paul "Mr. Wonderful" Orndorff left manager Bobby Heenan after a dispute here and announced that his new manager is Sir Oliver Humperdink, a recent WWF arrival from Florida. Orndorff is preparing to take on Heenan's new protege Rick Rude.

It all happened during a TV taping here when Heenan introduced Rude as his new man and claimed that he has the best body in the world. Orndorff, who takes great pride in his muscular physique, took exception to this and had words with Heenan. Unable to resolve his dispute with Heenan, Orndorff brought on Humperdink and introduced him as his manager.

There had been rumors for months that Humperdink, a notorious manager of rulebreakers in Florida, would change his ways and manage fan favorites in the WWF. This is an unusual situation, however, because both Humperdink and Orndorff are capable of changing at any time. Orndorff turned on tag team partner Hulk Hogan last year and joined Heenan.

Rude is a former World Class heavyweight champion and former co-holder of the NWA World tag belts with Manny Fernandez. He has made it known that he wants to win the WWF World championship, and might have a chance if he can deal with the Orndorff challenge.



Paul Orndorff (above left) dumped Bobby Heenan as his manager after Heenan said his newest protege, Rick Rude (above right), has the best body in the world.

Paul Orndorff (above left) dumped Bobby Heenan as his manager after Heenan said his newest protege, Rick Rude (above right), has the best body in the world.

Solie Leaves Florida TV Spot

By BILL APTER

TAMPA, FL—After 37 years of employment with Championship Wrestling From Florida, broadcaster Gordon Solie has terminated his on-air duties.

Solie was the TV man there for 26 years, doing publicity and ring announcing at the start of his relationship with CWF. Contractual disagreements with CWF forced Solie to leave.



Gordon Solie has resigned his announcing duties for Florida wrestling.

CWF announced that Steve Keim will assume Solie's duties. Keim was a member of The Fabulous Ones with Stan Lane and has always been a popular figure in the Sunshine State. Solie, meanwhile, continues as broadcaster for *Continental Championship Wrestling* and as co-host of the syndicated *Pro Wrestling This Week* with Joe Pedicino.

For decades, Solie has been the most recognizable broadcaster in wrestling. His distinctive voice and style has been imitated, but never quite duplicated, by other announcers around the world. But even more important, Solie's knowledge of the game gave him a unique insight. Solie's interviews were always a highlight of his CWF broadcasts.

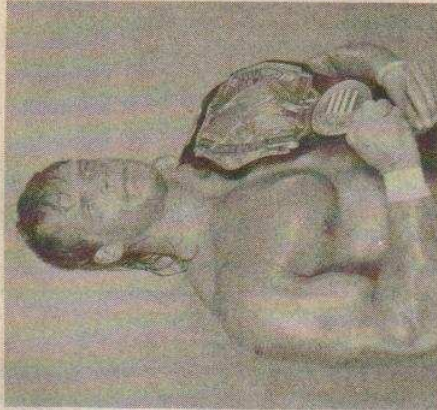
Rhodes Wants Luger's U.S. Title

signed for a series of matches against Luger.

"I want to make it known that I am going to be United States champion," said Rhodes. "Lex Luger, he beat my main man Nikita Koloff by cheating, and if Nikita can't get it back, I'm gonna get it back for him. And anyway, wouldn't it look very pretty to have that U.S. belt in my trophy case right next to all my other silver?"

Luger won the U.S. title on July 11 in Greensboro, North Carolina, with the aid of a chair thrown to him by manager J.J. Dillon. The sophomore superstar has rolled right along since then but figures to get a serious test from the veteran Rhodes. Although Dusty does not have the physique of Koloff or Luger, he has valuable experience and ring savvy. Luger claims he isn't worried.

"I've said all along that I am 'The Complete Package,' and I'm not gonna get worried about some fat old guy with a big mouth," said Luger. "I will own this belt forever!"



U.S. champion Lex Luger faces a challenge from Dusty Rhodes, who has never won that particular title.

By ANDY RODRIGUEZ

CHARLOTTE, NC—"The American Dream" Dusty Rhodes, saying that he has won every other major championship in the NWA, announced his intentions to go after Lex Luger's United States title. Rhodes has never won the U.S. belt. He immediately

Rockers Sign With Continental

By CRAIG PETERS

BIRMINGHAM, AL—The Midnight Rockers, Marty Jannetty and Shawn Michaels, signed a contract with Continental Championship Wrestling and are scheduled to start in this area shortly.

The announcement came following a tumultuous two months for the Rockers that saw them lose the AWA World tag team belts to Boris Zukhov and Soldat Ustinov, then leave the AWA for the WWF. But the Rockers stayed in the WWF for only a few days before leaving due to contractual

difficulties. "Our troubles are behind us and now it's just full speed ahead for The Midnight Rockers," said Jannetty. "We're excited about coming to Continental and our first order of business will be to get acquainted with the fans in this area. We've always had a good rapport with the fans and that's very important to us."

The Rockers hope to get a shot at the Southeast Continental tag team belts, currently held by fan favorites Robert Fuller and Jimmy Golden.

AROUND THE GLOBE

REPUBLIC OF SUDAN, AFRICA

Gary Hart, manager of Al Perez in the World Class area, returned to Malakal along the Blue Nile here in search of a young cannibal who reportedly is the brother of Abdullah the Butcher. According to Hart, when Abdullah left Africa and came to the United States, he left behind his baby brother. The young boy has since grown to the size of Abdullah but is even more fierce. Hart was hoping to bring him back to the U.S. but could not track him down.

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

A group of wrestling fans here, known as "The Von Erich Fan Club of Israel," recently made a visit to the Wailing Wall in the Old City to pray for Mike Von Erich, who committed suicide last spring. Rabbi Yitzhak Schmir, leader of the group, said that "although the Von Erich family is not Jewish, they have always been respected by the world Jewish community and are heroes in Israel," where *World Class Championship Wrestling* is often broadcast.

TOKYO, JAPAN

In the wake of reports that International tag team champions The Road Warriors would be banned from Japan, All-Japan officials here announced that Animal and Hawk would return in October for an extended tour. Japanese wrestling officials were seriously considering banning the Warriors because of their dominance over local rivals, but fan protest apparently caused them to change their minds. The Warriors are one of the most popular tag teams in Japan.

Orndorff challenge.

dorff brought on Humberman and introduced him as his manager.

THE PWI POLL

Each month, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* will conduct a poll on a controversial issue in the sport today. The results present a multifaceted view of public opinion that offers valuable insights into the views of your fellow fans

THE SUBJECT: THE PWI YEARS

In the time since *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* first hit the newsstands, wrestling has undergone incredible changes. The expansion of the WWF in the early and mid-'80s resulted in unprecedented growth and popularity for the sport as a whole. Since then, nearly every major federation has expanded to become a nationwide operation, and wrestling is now seen by more people than ever before.

While *PWI* takes no credit for this growth, we feel fortunate to have been around to document the sport as it went through the most important years in its history. We feel confident in saying that we have provided a complete chronicle of wrestling from 1979 to the present. And you, the readers, have been along for the ride through these amazing years.

Our telephone poll of over 1,000 *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* readers who have followed the sport for at least eight years (culled from subscription lists; statistical margin of error plus or minus three percent) attempted to get your opinions on how the sport has changed since 1979.

Prior to 1983 or so, the major federations essentially stuck to their own regions. Then Vince McMahon Jr. changed the sport forever when he invaded areas previously dominated by the NWA and the AWA. Eventually, other federations were forced to follow suit. But while wrestling is now seen by more people than ever before, the smaller, more regional promotions have often suffered. In many cases, they have been engulfed by the giants. Our readers felt that expansion has helped wrestling, but the voting was very close on this important question.

Wrestlers today are bigger, stronger, and more agile than ever before. Since there is more money to be made in wrestling today, more athletes are choosing this sport over other athletic endeavors. An overwhelming

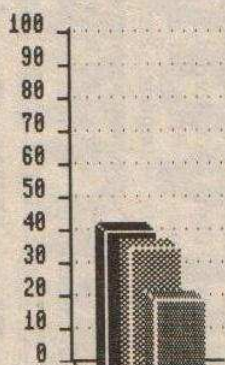
77 percent of our readers said that wrestlers have improved as athletes. And as the quality of wrestlers themselves has improved, the quality of the wrestling itself has also improved, according to 65 percent of our readers.

Wrestling's increased exposure on TV has forced commissions to step down on the violence in the sport, and a majority of our readers (53 percent) said that wrestling is less violent today than it

was in 1979. But the fans do not think much of the officiating. Fans rarely appreciate the work of the referees, and 61 percent said that officiating was better in 1979 than it is today.

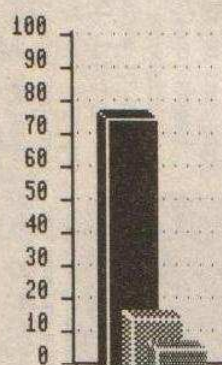
Finally, we wondered if higher quality, but less violent wrestling, resulted in better wrestling programming on TV. An overwhelming 72 percent agreed that the quality of wrestling on TV has definitely improved. □

Has expansion helped wrestling?



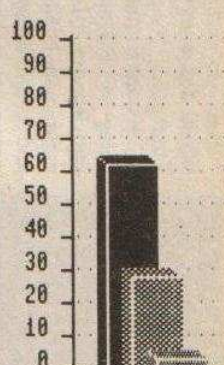
Yes: 42%
No: 37%
Undecided: 21%

Have wrestlers improved as athletes?



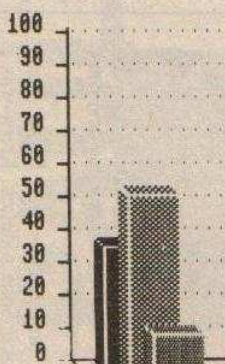
Yes: 77%
No: 16%
Undecided: 7%

Has the quality of wrestling improved?



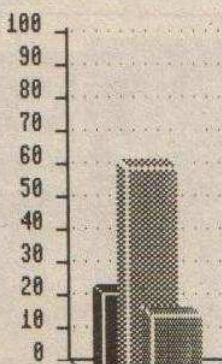
Yes: 65%
No: 30%
Undecided: 5%

Is wrestling more violent today than it was in 1979?



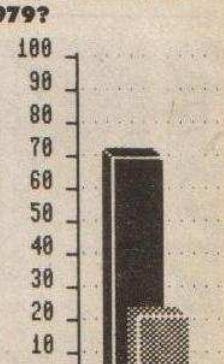
Yes: 37%
No: 53%
Undecided: 10%

Is the officiating better today than it was in 1979?



Yes: 23%
No: 61%
Undecided: 16%

Is the quality of wrestling TV programming better today than it was in 1979?

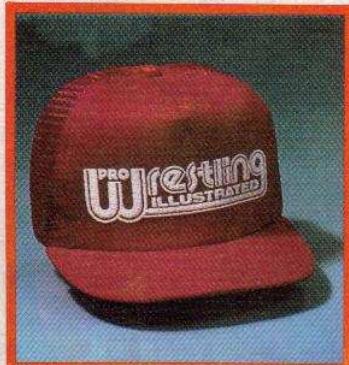


Yes: 72%
No: 24%
Undecided: 4%

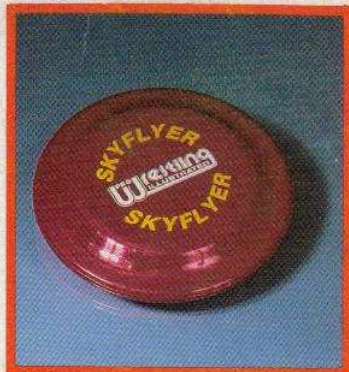
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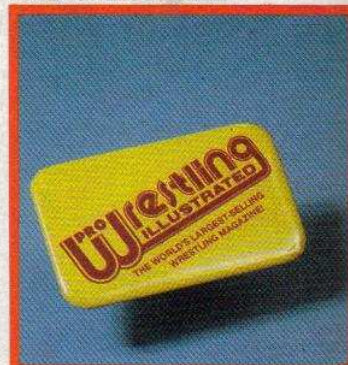
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